

the chronicle

Cecil to celebrate his 90th birthday with a concert

– see page 3



Plaque unveiled in memory of killed soldier

– see page 9



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Roadworks now pose jobs threat as trade hit

TRADERS blighted by a 15-month Black Country roadworks scheme say they have just weeks left before they start cutting jobs and hours to save cash.

The A1100 in Cradley Heath is currently undergoing a £3 million programme of roadworks to tackle on-street parking and congestion. It includes providing parking bays for shoppers. But the work is coming at a cost to traders, who say takings are less than a third of what they were before it began in October.

Stephen Pitts, owner of TeeT Shirts in Reddel Hill Road, said jobs could go within eight weeks unless the situation picks up. The shop employs five people.

"We're hoping and praying the work does finish soon," he said.

At John Jones Footwear in Upper High Street one worker has already been made redundant and the hours of the three remaining workers could be cut.

Sandwell Council said the works were scheduled to end in December.

Fear over new rent pay points

RESIDENTS will no longer be able to pay their council house rent in cash at new offices in Brierley Hill.

There are fears elderly people will struggle to pay their bills using new pay points. But council bosses say the decision was made for the safety of vulnerable residents who would be at risk of being mugged carrying large sums of cash.

The Brierley Hill housing office and Citizens' Advice Bureau will be moved to the town's High Street library under plans costing £100,000.

Ward councillor Rachel Harris said: "Older people prefer to pay by cash and this could be difficult for them."

Dudley Council officials say the move will create a one-stop shop for all three services at the location.

Church concert date for singers

THE Clent Hills Singers will be raising the roof on a Hagley church for a special Lent concert. The event will take place at St Saviour's Church, from 7.30pm, on Saturday March 26.

They will be performing funeral music on the death of Queen Mary, by Henry Purcell, which will be followed by a Johann N Hummel arrangement.

Tickets are available from £6 and can be bought by contacting David Pettit on 01562 730248. Refreshments will also be available.

Anyone who is interested in joining the group should contact group secretary Linda Evans on 01562 885073.

Hero soldier conquers mountain for charity



Paul Jacobs on Mount Kilimanjaro with two guides

A STOURBRIDGE hero soldier blinded by a Taliban bomb has scaled new heights after successfully climbing one of the world's tallest mountains.

Rifleman Paul Jacobs, aged 22, who served in 2nd Battalion The Rifles, lost his sight when a bomb detonated as he was serving in Afghanistan in 2009.

He was given the George Cross for his "faultless courage, selflessness and dedication to his unit" after helping to evacuate his comrades from the danger zone despite his injuries.

And he has refused to let his blindness hold him back – a determination which has seen him now climb Mount Kilimanjaro to raise

thousands of pounds for charity.

Rfn Jacobs, who now lives in Stourbridge with fiancée Louise Smith, aged 24, completed the final hour of his ascent on his hands and knees due to the lack of oxygen near the peak but refused to give in.

"It was like someone was sitting on my chest. Nothing prepared me for the lack of oxygen," he said.

Jubilant

"I needed the porters to help me get there but I was determined to make it.

"When I finally got there I was too tired to feel jubilant. I just wanted to sleep.

"It wasn't until I was on the plane on the way back I got a real sense of achievement."

Rfn Jacobs is aiming to raise

£8,000 for St Dunstan's, a charity which helps blind and partially sighted ex-servicemen and women to live independently.

He has so far raised around £2,500 and says climbing the mountain is only the start of what he wants to do.

The soldier plans to become the first blind person to swim the English Channel and is also planning a parachute jump and to do the Great North Run.

He added: "The charity has been a lifeline for me and this is my way of giving them something back."

Rfn Jacobs met his fiancée at Selly Oak Hospital, in Birmingham, where she is a military ward health care assistant.

He thanked her father, Peter, aged 49, who completed the climb alongside him.

CHAOS AS £22m CUTS APPROVED

● Police called ● Gallery uproar ● Demo on steps

Shadow finance chief warns of more than 1,000 job losses

MORE than 1,000 people could find themselves out of a job when the full impact of Dudley Council's £35 million budget cuts are revealed, opposition councillors claimed.

As part of the heated debate in the chamber, shadow cabinet member for finance Councillor Pete Lowe said: "There will be 429 full-time equivalent jobs going this year, rising to 828 full-time equivalent jobs to go within a three-year period," he told the meeting.

"But what we should not forget is that the majority of Dudley Council employees are part time workers. This means, by my calculations, that the full impact of job cuts could be in excess of 1,000."

included members of the National Unions of Teachers and the Dudley Coalition Against the Cuts group – chose to leave rather than stay in silence.

Tensions were running high even before the meeting, when it emerged there were only 45 seats available in the public gallery and entry was by ticket only. They were handed out 'first come, first served' forcing dozens more protesters out.

Proceedings were called to a halt

after Councillor Miller had called for quiet twice and people in the gallery starting chanting: "No ifs, no buts, no to fery cuts".

The budget, which sets out plans to save £22m during the 2011/12 financial year, was approved following more than three hours of debate at Dudley Council house.

Cuts totalling £35 million are to be made over three years.

New cuts which came to light include almost £500,000 to be axed

from the Dudley Performing Arts group. The cuts mean major events – including Rock the Castle and the annual Summer Festival – will no longer be able to be held.

Other moves include cutting £569,000 from family centres in Stourbridge, Coseley and Gornal, and merging them with nearby children's centres, and axing £650,000 for children with mental and physical disabilities.

Before the meeting began more than 150 people carrying flags and banners gathered outside Dudley Council house to protest against what they labelled "brutal" cuts.

Among the protesters – many wearing Dudley Council uniforms – were workers fearing for their jobs, members of unions such as Unison, Unite and NUT, and campaign group Dudley Coalition Against The Cuts. Laura Gibbard, from the Dudley Coalition Against The Cuts, said: "Cuts to local services – particularly those which are going to affect the most vulnerable people in society – are just not acceptable," she said.



Helena Lawson from Unison and other protesters outside the budget meeting at Dudley Council House, Priory Road, Dudley

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Last three care homes face review by council

THE long-term future of the three remaining council-run residential care homes in Dudley will be reviewed within two years, the authority said.

Council leaders have revealed that they are considering the fate of 31-bed New Bradley Hall, in Kingswinford, 32-bed Russells Court, in Dudley, and 41-bed Shennstone, in Halesowen, as part of a review of social care in the wake of Government cuts.

They are the last three council-run long-stay care homes after it was announced last year that Tiled House Care Home, Pen-nett, and Amblecote House would be shut.

The Tory cabinet member for adult and community services, Councillor Lesley Faulkner, said: "It's important to emphasise that no decision has been taken at this stage to close the remaining three long-stay residential care homes in the borough - New Bradley Hall, Russells Court or Shennstone."

"Proposals to consider the future of long-stay care homes in the borough will take place over the next two years as part of the council's modernisation of social services."

Councillor Faulkner said that social care for older people in Dudley was changing.

"Many older people have told the council that they want to maintain their health and independence for as long as possible and this is the focus of Dudley's new vision for social care," she said.

"It means the council is modernising its approach and looking at positive alternative options."

Apartments

"One of the options, extra care housing, is designed to offer independent living for older people and is a positive alternative to what many would consider as traditional social care services such as residential care."

The authority is ploughing ahead with plans for five extra care housing schemes which will provide around 600 flats to help meet the needs of older people.

Work has already started on two schemes at Russells Hall and Coseley.

The £16 million Russells Hall scheme will have 132 apartments and will be aimed at the over 55s, while the Coseley scheme is an £8m project and will comprise 72 apartments.

Delay in repairs to rock face

WORK to repair a rock face at risk of collapse along an historic Dudley canal will begin two months later than first expected. Council chiefs sanctioned repair work costing £350,000 in the Dudley Canal Tunnel and Limestone Mines to prevent a landslide at Castle Mill Basin, off Birmingham New Road, in October. Originally it had been hoped workers would be on site before the end of January but the design work has been taking longer than expected.

Final chance for mother who stole

A MOTHER-OF-THREE has been given a suspended jail sentence after admitting stealing four computer games from a store.

Dudley magistrates told recovering drug addict Chloe Vigar, aged 24, of Watsons Close, Kates Hill, she was being given a "final chance".

She admitted taking the games, worth £79.79, from HMV in Dudley's Merry Hill Centre six days after being

given a 12-month community order for a separate crime.

Vigar was also on bail for another theft, Miss Maxine Jarrouse, prosecuting, said. Miss Ruth Pathan, defending, said Vigar had been forced into the theft to repay a £40 debt.

She was given a 16-week sentence suspended for 12 months, 12 months supervision and drug rehabilitation for the same period.

Lovelle wins as shop celebrates



YMCA fundraising manager Steve Bavington, back left, mayor and mayoress Peter and Hilary Miller, and YMCA centre manager Wendy Bennett with, front, contestants Amy Taylor, Anthony Slater, and the winner, Lovelle Foster

STAFF and shoppers at a charity shop in Brierley Hill have hit a high note to celebrate their first year in operation.

The YMCA shop at the Moor Centre opened on March 2 last year. Since then they have had more than 100 young people through the doors volunteering and helping on work placements.

To mark the birthday staff held a talent contest with seven current staff and volunteers.

The judges, who included Dudley Mayor Peter Miller and Steve Bavington, from the YMCA, West Bromwich, picked 20-year-old Lovelle Foster of Stourbridge as the winner.

She performed a Rihanna song and gained a certificate signed by the mayor.

Shop manager Julie Vaughan said: "Our first year has been brilliant."

"We have had around 100 young people working with us over the year on various placements and the people of Dudley have been very good to us."

Flooded library's opening chapter

A LIBRARY closed indefinitely following flood damage is to reopen at the end of next month.

Heating and electrics at Blackheath Library were damaged after an outside sewer pipe burst during the December freeze and flooded the cellar.

A mobile library service was set up while repair works took place.

The closure follows that of nearby Valley Road Express Library, which flooded in July as firefighters tackled a blaze in a nearby flat. It reopened after three months after it was fully repaired and dried out.

The new £1.9 million Blackheath Library currently under construction, will not open until at least May.

The library is set to transform the landscape of the town and will also be home to new offices for the Black Country Housing Group.

Councillor Ann Shackleton, Sandwell's cabinet member for youth, culture and leisure said: "Work on the library is well under way and hopefully it can be reopened late next month."

"There is still no date set for the opening of the new library, but it is hoped to take place in May."

"Once that is done the old library building will be put up for sale. We have said that whoever buys it must keep the original appearance of the building."

All libraries in Sandwell are currently under review,

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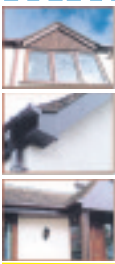
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Singer Cecil hits 90th birthday note

A STOURBRIDGE pensioner's noteworthy singing career is to be honoured with a concert by leading musicians to celebrate his 90th birthday.

Retired headteacher Cecil Drew, of High Park Avenue, Wollaston, is well known in choral and church groups in the West Midlands for his fine bass baritone voice, and he was in demand as a soloist for decades.

Mr Drew is an honorary fellow of Birmingham Conservatoire, where he founded an annual singing contest named after him.

The Cecil Drew Oratorio Prize was won by Welsh singer Rhydian soon after he became famous as runner-up in the X Factor in 2007. His wife of 55 years, Barbara Drew, 82, said: "Rhydian sang it is enough from Mendelssohn's oratorio Elijah – and it was so beautiful it made adults cry."

Teaching

Mr Drew used to sing at Bethel Chapel in Lye – performing in Stainer's Crucifixion every year. He took a correspondence course to become a licentiate of Trinity College London.

He was a teacher at Gignill Primary School, Stourbridge, and later became headteacher at Clifton-upon-Teme Primary School in Worcestershire.

Mrs Drew said her husband also used to do some private singing teaching – but gave up "because all they wanted was to sing like Simon Le Bon".

The concert in honour of Mr Drew's 90th birthday – featuring pianists Philip Martin, of Birmingham Conservatoire, David Quigley, an Irish conductor and composer, and Mark Bebbington, a professional musician from



Best baritone – Cecil Drew proudly showing his musical award from 1943 and, inset, Cecil when he was a young man

Hagley – is at Wollaston's St James's Church on April 5.

Mr Drew said: "I'm very happy about the concert plan.

"I would like to be able to sing there but I will have to see how I am then."



Night out ended in fighting

A THUG who kicked two men in the head after birthday celebrations turned into a brawl in Stourbridge has been jailed for eight months.

Paul Clarke was among two groups caught on CCTV fighting in High Street in the early hours of October 28, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

Clarke, aged 38, from Cole Green, Shirley, kicked a man twice in the head after launching a similar attack on another victim. He also hit a man in the fight.

Clarke, who had been on a night out to celebrate a friend's birthday, walked off but was arrested soon afterwards. He was the only person involved to face courts, it was revealed.

Clarke, who had previous convictions, admitted affray and was jailed for eight months.

Jazz session swings along

SUNDAY afternoons can swing along gently in Stourbridge with some jazz. Bobby Johnson's Gentle Jazz five-piece is on the move with a new venue for the date on Sunday (March 13).

The swing and easy listening jazz session, from 1pm to 3.30pm, will be at Stourbridge FC's Ambleside ground. "I'm just trying to promote my kind of music in Stourbridge," said trombonist and sax player Johnson.

The session could become a regular event if well supported. Admission is £4.

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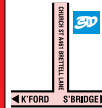
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Gym will fit in with college's revamp

PROPOSALS for a new gym have been unveiled at Stourbridge College as part of a £1 million revamp.

A planning application has been lodged to transform a courtyard and the old staff dining room into a new development for students and staff to work out. It is hoped if the scheme gets the go-ahead it could be open by September.

Education bosses at the Hagley Road college say the gym will provide space for weights, stretching and working out on gym equipment including treadmills, exercise bikes, cross-trainers and rowing machines.

The facilities will be available for use by staff and students and is part of a wider investment in upgrading facilities to improve student learning facilities across the board at the college.

The gym is part of a refurbishment programme which



A computer generated image of how Stourbridge College's new gym will look inside is plans are approved

has included the recent redevelopment of the sports hall, refectory and the completion of a new job shop.

Principal Lynette Cutting said: "We have a variety of successful sports courses on offer and it's vital that students have access to a gym which includes changing and showering facilities. This investment will

enhance the learning of our students, will add value in terms of healthy living and will contribute to our ever increasing success rates in this area."

She added: "While we were unable to completely upgrade our Hagley Road Centre with a new building, we are still aiming to invest in our current facilities to the benefit of both

staff and students."

The fitness suite has been designed by architects, Pick Everard - the designers who are working on the £12 million college campus being built in Brierley Hill town centre.

A planning application for the gym at the Hagley Road site has been lodged with Dudley Council planners.

Tickets for illegal parkers

MORE than 300 parking tickets have been issued to drivers on two Stourbridge streets in the space of a year.

Between February 2010 and the end of this January, 120 fixed penalties were given to drivers on Market Street and another 195 on High Street.

Drivers have been caught parking on double yellow lines, which can make it difficult for other motorists to pass while they dash into shops. They are also overstaying the time allowed to park in designated bays.

Motorists often park up illegally to avoid having to use one of the car parks on the outskirts of the town centre. Plans have

been mooted to overhaul High Street in a bid to improve pedestrian safety by widening narrow pavements. But the scheme could see car parking spaces reduced with sections of the pavement built out to provide extra space for people to walk.

Council chiefs said if they can find the money to get that scheme off the ground they may look to improve access to other car parks, including whether a possible crossing in the area of Birmingham Street is feasible.

Recently approved plans to give a £50 million facelift to the ailing Crown Centre with a new Tesco being built will also impact on parking in the town. The scheme

will see the existing Crown Centre and Bell Street multi-storey car park will be demolished in the move. More than 500 car parking spaces will be built in a two-level car park under the new Crown Centre.

Stourbridge councillor and deputy Dudley Council leader Les Jones said the development would make a "big difference". Speaking of the other scheme to improve pedestrian safety, he added: "It will be wider pavements, better access for parents with pushchairs and the disabled and will make the feel of the town better."

Negotiations have been going with Tesco about funding possible road improvements.

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Project unchains links to the past



Celebrating the success of the Cradley Heritage Project is project leader Harry Bloomer with chain-maker Annette Bradney

HISTORY enthusiasts have marked the success and completion of the Cradley Heritage Project which has introduced a new generation to the Black Country's industrial past.

In the summer of 2009 the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded £49,700 to the Cradley Then and Now Group to help them record Black Country history.

Over a 15 month period a series of events and projects were funded to introduce and educate members of the community about the area's industrial heritage.

At the celebratory evening the Cradley community were shown artefacts, photographs and film which depicts the history of town.

Harry Bloomer, Cradley Then and Now Project leader, said: "It has been a huge success."

The project included an exhibition at the Black Country Living Museum, visits to schools and the production of three DVDs. The heritage project has also used the funding to revamp the Cradley Trail.

Labour anger as extra £3.6m in cuts ordered

EXTRA budget cuts of around £3.6 million must be made to Dudley Council's children's services this year on top of £6m already agreed. The department had already resigned itself to losing almost £9m by 2014, with the first £5.8m of savings to be made in the 2011-12 financial year.

But bosses have now revealed that they have been warned of extra pressures on the service as Government cuts continue to bite, increasing the amount to be saved to £12m over the next three years.

Critics on the council labelled it a "slash and burn" attitude to making the budget decisions. Labour's shadow cabinet member for children's services, Councillor Tim Crumpton, said: "This is a disastrous situation, and a very dangerous position for us to be in."

"It seems to me that we are heading back to the Dark Ages. The council will be able to provide only very basic services to those most in need, while everyone else will be left to fend for themselves."

Councillor Crumpton added: "It's important to remember that Dudley Council has actually had very little say in the amount they have to save, it's very much a central Government move."

The savings include more than £2.5m to be taken from Dudley Council's support to schools and improvement programmes.

It is thought that the cuts will include scrapping the council's support team of teachers who are sent in to help improve failing schools, along with psychology and welfare services.

"To be told at this late stage that an extra £3m needs to be lost this coming year is disgraceful," Councillor Crumpton said.

"We should be at the stage now where the department knows how much money it has to spend, but that isn't the case thanks to this."

The Conservative-run cabinet member for finance, Councillor David Blood, said the reduction had come from grants including the Early Intervention Grant.

Fight for career centres

MORE than 3,000 people have signed petitions protesting about the withdrawal of funding from two Connexions careers advice centres and other community services in Dudley. Two petitions have been handed to Dudley Council protesting against cuts which could mean the closure of the Benefits Shop and a volunteer support team on the Priory estate. Dudley Council will not be renewing its £1.3 million contract with Prospect Services which runs the Connexions centres in Wolverhampton Street, Dudley, and High Street, Stourbridge. The deal runs out on March 31.

More smokers giving up habit

MORE than 1,700 smokers have kicked the habit in Dudley borough over the last few months.

Health chiefs say they had all avoided lighting up four weeks after they first decided to quit smoking.

The figures were released ahead of No Smoking Day, which takes place on Thursday, aimed at encouraging more people to kick the habit for good.

They show that between April and December last year a total of 1,729 were listed as four-week quitters after seeking help through

Dudley's Stop Smoking service. During the last full financial year, 2009-2010, there was a record number of quitters in Dudley with 2,611 stopping smoking.

Nationally it is thought since the public smoking ban was introduced in 2007, the numbers quitting is up.

Dudley health bosses arranged a series of events for people to find out more about giving up smoking. The stop smoking team will be at the Cancer UK Awareness Roadshow in Dudley town centre on Thursday and Friday.

Wedding car plea is answered



Owner Robert Hathaway, in the driving seat, with Carole Geary and Robert Baker inside the Bristol 410 and inset, the couple in front of their dream car

A MOTORING fanatic has found the dream car for his wedding after an appeal for help.

Robert Baker, aged 59, of Wall Heath, and his fiancée Carole Geary will have a Bristol 410 at the ceremony this month.

The day will be especially poignant as it was announced last week that the historic firm has gone into administration.

Robert Hathaway, owner of Bell End Farm, Belbroughton, saw an article on Mr Baker's search and offered to help.

Miss Geary, a hairdresser's assistant, will be taken to the Church of Ascension in Wall Heath by Mr Hathaway in the 1968 model.

He also owns a 1955 Bristol 404, which he bought 40 years ago, and

said he "loves the design" of the cars.

Self-employed builder Mr Baker has fantasised about owning a Bristol since he was a boy.

And though he could not afford the £50,000 price tag attached to one, he hoped someone would lend him one for his big day.

He said: "I was so pleased when Robert got in touch. The car will be a real head turner on the day."

Saved

Mr Baker, of Forge Lane, owns an MG RV8, which he bought in Japan for £15,000. He had saved up for years.

He and Miss Geary have known each other for about 25 years and got engaged 18 months ago.

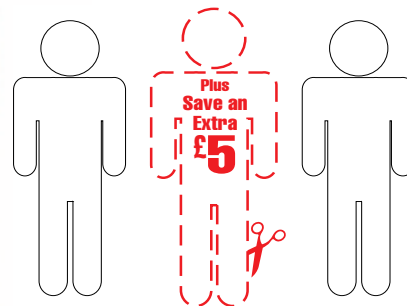
His love affair with the Bristol began when he saw one when he was 10 years

old in Wall Heath. He said: "They are pure luxury and are from a time when cars were individually made."

The 410 dates back the 1960s, and is used in the BBC series The Inspector Lynley Mysteries.

The firm has been hand-building luxury cars since 1946 at its factory in Filton in the north of Bristol. But administrators have been appointed at the company.

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28th March-1st April -- 5 Days

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5 Days

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Carlton Hotel - Isle of Wight

25th-29th April 5 Days

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- Manchester hotel, Bournemouth 18th-22nd April 5 days £175
- Chatsworth hotel, Llandudno 18th-22nd April 5 days £189
- Royal Albion, Brighton 25th-29th April 5 days £179
- Carlton Hotel, Isle of Wight 25th-29th April 5 days £189
- Grosvenor Hotel, Torquay 25th-29th April 5 days £149
- Kistor hotel, Torquay 9th-13th May 5 days £189
- Grand hotel, Scarborough 23rd-27th May 5 days £189
- Glastonbury hotel, Eastbourne 2nd-6th May 5 days £179
- Richmoor hotel, Weymouth 2nd-6th May 5 days £205
- Salisbury hotel, Folkestone 9th-13th May 5 days £169
- Peak District/Robin Hood Country 9th-13th May 5 days £179
- Manchester hotel, Bournemouth 16th-20th May 5 days £185
- Manchester City Break 30th May-3rd June 5 days £179
- St George hotel, Yarmouth 31st May-4th June 5 days £169

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Wrekin Luncheon Club

Our last Luncheon Meeting was held on Valentine's Day and in the spirit of the day we were talking about jewellery. Goldsmith and Jeweller Mr David Nicholls spoke to us about "All that Glitters" and he was able to give us a fascinating insight into gold, other precious metals and stones and in particular how we should take care of our jewellery.

David was keen to point out that we can usually clean and maintain our precious pieces with products from around the house and that there is generally no need for expensive specialist products.

However, a diamond, which is the hardest gemstone, has to be treated differently to a soft gemstone such as an opal and therefore it is vital to use the correct products.

Also jewellery that looks dirty is often not but is discoloured by a chemical reaction from the body and in particular perfumes.

He explained the differences between simulated, cultured and real or natural pearls and whilst real or natural pearls are extremely expensive you cannot actually tell the difference unless you x-ray them to see their nucleus. He also told us that dark pearls are generally stained but the Tahitian black pearl is truly black and cannot be coloured and is very expensive at £1,000 to £1,200 per pearl. We are all examining our pearls closely!

David was also able to tell us a little about cameos and that the word "cameo" actually describes a style of cutting from the conch shell.

A lot of people are presently selling their gold jewellery. David says that gold should never need to be mined again as there is plenty to make jewellery forever. He also told us that gold is extremely malleable and easy to work with and can be stretched and stretched. However because it is so malleable it is quite easy for stones to fall out of it and therefore settings should be checked regularly so as not to lose those precious jewels.

Depending upon the jewellery David tells us that to clean it we can use hot water, sometimes boiling water, washing up liquid, three in one oil, alka-seltzer, vinegar or even the inside of a banana skin.

It was a most interesting talk and the vote of thanks was given by Elizabeth Chadwick. Our next meeting is on 14th March.

Pages alive for Book Week fair

Newport Junior School

School celebrating books! Children had the opportunity to meet new children and share a book. They also worked together to write tongue twisters. Both schools had an enjoyable afternoon.

We also held a dressing up day where staff and children came to school dressed as their favourite book characters. Those who dressed up took part in a special book day parade in assembly and book prizes were awarded to those with the most creative costumes. The overall winners were: Ethan Henderson, Nile Murphy, Emily Hulland, Daisy Adams, Rachael Butler, Rhiannon Bowen, Alex Maidens, Georgina Turpin, Jennifer Ray, Antonia Goodrich, Emily Colbert, Callum Brookfield, Becky Rodgers, Oscar Johnstone, Agatha

Johnstone, Oliver Birchall, Sam Oliver, Thomas Dowson, Toby Adams and Michael Cooper.

Congratulations to everyone who dressed up for book day and thank you to our parents and friends who created some fabulous costumes.

Year 5 children took part in a visit to Liverpool on Friday as part of their work looking at The Beatles. The children visited the Beatles museum at the Albert Dock. They also spent time at the new Fab 4 4D attraction at the docks which they thoroughly enjoyed. During the visit children had the opportunity to dress like the Beatles and make music! The trip was enjoyed by staff and children. The children were commended for their enthusiasm and excellent behaviour.



Newport Junior School staff and children celebrated World Book Day last week by dressing as their favourite book characters. Seen here are colourful pupils Sam O'Gara, Jack Jones, Jonathan Downes, Olivia Morton, Ayse Et, Agatha Johnstone, Alanha Talbot-Hillier, Daisy Wood, Alex Maidens, David Nelson.

Newport Junior School and Newport Infant School PTA's organised a quiz night on Friday at school. This was a very successful and well supported event. We are very grateful to our PTA for their continued support.

Newport Junior School would like to invite all local senior citizens to our Easter Tea Party on Wednesday March 30. The event will take place in the school hall from 2pm. You are invited to enjoy free entertainment and refreshments!

Female 77

Michael Miles gave members a fascinating insight into his book called "The Astonishing History of Newport". Amongst the items in the book are murder, fraud, bigamy, greed, snobbery, deceit, seduction and terrorism.

His slides showed buildings and shops on the High Street of different ages.

Pat Collins fair, which was in Newport for 800 years, Tuckers shop and consequent development, the old Smithfield and recent housing development, Audco, and the canal development.

Next week, Ken Ballantyne will be talking about the roles of Bomber Command and Women in WW2.

There will also be books for sale.

Ramblers

Market Drayton Ramblers are having an 11-mile leisurely walk in the Pres Green, Weston, Wixhill, Lee Brockhurst and Soutlon Hall areas this Sunday.

The group leaves from Towers Lawn car park at 9am and the walk will be led by Paul who can be contacted on 01948 841366.

There is also a walk on Tuesday in the Gnosall area and the group leaves from Towers Lawn car park at 9.30am.

For further details, contact Doreen on 01630 654909.



Members of the Market Drayton branch of the Shropshire Wildlife Trust.

Market Drayton Local Branch: Saturday February 5, start 2pm. Despite the howling wind and rain the first group activity, a walk on Walkmill Meadows, started off with eight of us soon to be joined by two others. The warden for 'Friends of Walkmill Meadows' talked about the history of the site whilst Bernard Beekes told us about the geology, John Panter helped with the flora and fauna.

This was followed by a tour of Ford-hall Farm led by Beth Kennett. We were surprised by the diversity of work that has been achieved here and, from the ruins of a moat and bailey, Bernard pointed out many geological features. It is planned to carry out various flora

Wildlife Trust

and fauna surveys plus other activities over the next few months. Despite being wet and cold we all had an interesting and enjoyable afternoon.

On Sat February 9, start 11.30am, John hosted a guided tour (and litter pick) of Quarry Wood. Interesting landmarks, ancient trees were pointed out and a brief geological history was given. Around 1pm Roger kindly invited us to his house for a delightful lunch. We then went down to explore the Woodland Trust site of Old Church Farm. This was bequeathed to the village as an educational amenity some

years ago, but the WT have not done anything with it apart from selling off some land for building! We found that it was completely overgrown but the pool appears to be free of pollution so should be an interesting project for a wildlife survey. John has been in touch with the Woodland Trust and they are prepared to hand over the management of the site to SWT as long as it is kept as a nature reserve.

Please enjoy our little oases of nature and help to look after them. Litter and other pollution will destroy them, so please ensure you remove/pick up any rubbish.

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Musical milestone for Marcus



Marcus Heathcock with Roman Leontiev, conductor of the St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra Klassika

MARCUS Tristan Heathcock will soon have composed more symphonies than Beethoven or Mahler – as well as having a “hip hop” number one album in Russia under his belt.

The 43-year-old, of Bowling Green Road, Stourbridge, composed his first piece for the piano at the age of three – before he could even play the instrument.

He is now associate composer for the St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra Klassika in Russia and is writing his 10th symphony, to be dedicated to his fiancée Faith Pentland, 32, also from Stourbridge.

An opera and an 11th symphony, based upon the ancient Assyrian king Esarhaddon and produced in association with the British

Composer set to produce Symphonies No 10 and 11

Museum, are also taking shape. “My music is quite approachable – although I have my own language, which is 21st century. I am not avant garde,” said Marcus, who has a 13-year-old daughter Vanessa, from his marriage to a Russian woman, Valentina.

“The classical composers I love are Schumann, Schubert and Mozart, although I also enjoy folk music, The Beatles and Led Zeppelin.”

“And I have even recorded a hip hop album called Salaam Alei Kum Brother – meaning ‘Hello Brother’ in Arabic – which reached number one in Russia in about 2005.” Marcus’s father, 69-year-old

Frank Heathcock, also of Bowling Green Road, is an amateur recorder and keyboard player, and his mother, now Mrs Jenny Owen, of Robin’s Close, Oldswinford, Stourbridge, sings for Kidderminster Choral Society.

The young composer began writing music even before he could read, when he produced “Minuet in E flat” for the piano at the age of three. He started piano lessons a couple of years later.

He attended Stourbridge’s Elmfield School and did his A-levels at the town’s King Edward VI Sixth Form College in Lower High Street, where he used to compose music for the orchestra, helping it to win the

National Festival of Music in 1987, under head of music, John Griswold.

The college is in the same building where Led Zeppelin’s Robert Plant went to the former King Edward VI Grammar School.

After leaving the Royal Academy of Music with an honours degree in musical composition in 1990, Marcus worked as a teacher at Elmfield School, where he first met his current partner, Faith, who was then a pupil.

Assyria

Their paths crossed again in Stourbridge last year, when they fell for each other. They plan to move to the Glasgow area and eventually get married. “I have composed literally hundreds of pieces of music and am currently writing my 10th symphony, to be dedicated to my love for Faith, which will be played first by the St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra Klassika,” said Marcus.

“I recently also became fascinated by the life of Esarhaddon, who was King of Assyria in 600BC and who conquered Egypt, despite being slightly deformed and suffering from an illness that meant he had to keep out of the sun.”

“I have been working on it with Dr Irving



Marcus at the piano at King Edward VI Sixth Form College with his fiancée Faith Pentland

Finkel, senior Assyriologist but was warned we could get death threats if we tried to perform it in Iraq because the Islam opera house in world does not recognise the ancient civilisation.”

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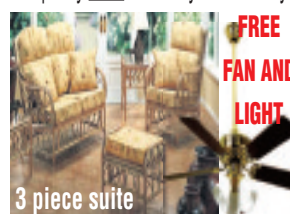
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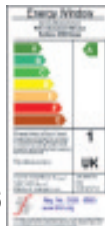
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This is the winner of the Snap Happy competition for February which is from Chris Lloyd of Wordsley who took this snap of a wintry Lake Vyrnwy, Wales.

If you have snaps waiting to see the light of day, no matter how old or recent they are, as long as they are good quality and sharp we want to share them with everyone in the Chronicle region and the world beyond.

If they are of life in the Midlands, your family or the past we want to show them on our website.

Over the month Chronicle readers and web visitors will vote for their favourite picture and as a prize we will frame it free for the winner to hang on their wall.

So wherever you are in the Chronicle region send in your pictures either on disc, by emails or hard copy with **FULL NAME ADDRESS AND CONTACT NUMBER** along with any information about the snap to: Danny Farragher, "SnapHappy" 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES or email salch Chronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

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7ft-6in	2286	312.00	318.00	333.00	340.00	404.00	411.00	427.00	428.00	478.00	498.00	502.00
8ft	2438	312.00	318.00	333.00	340.00	404.00	411.00	427.00	428.00	478.00	498.00	502.00
9ft	2744	322.00	334.00	341.00	348.00	408.00	415.00	430.00	444.00	480.00	502.00	507.00
10ft	3048	331.00	334.00	341.00	348.00	408.00	415.00	430.00	444.00	480.00	502.00	507.00

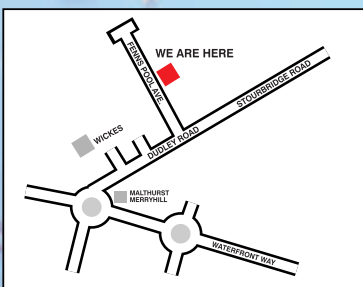
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thechronicle COMPETITION

Snap up vouchers for your favourite all-purpose store

TO celebrate today's grand re-opening of its Halesowen store, situated on Hagley Street, Wilkinson's is offering 20 lucky Chronicle readers the chance to win £25 worth of vouchers to spend on products in its half-price homewares sale.

Ewan Chapman, warden of The Leasowes, was cutting the ceremonial ribbon at 9am alongside representatives and children from Halesowen CofE Primary School whose colourful spring themed posters, specifically created for the day, were being put on display.

During the re-opening celebrations, representatives from The Leasowes will be setting up a 'Garden and Wildlife Station' in the Get Growing aisles, offering advice to customers looking to buy gardening products and equipment.

Staff will hand out sweets and balloons throughout the day, and a volunteer from Wilkinson's charity of the year, Anthony Nolan, is hosting a raffle where customers have the chance of winning spring clean and garden products, including flower



WIN!

seeds, gardening gloves and dusters.

The fun will continue on Saturday (March 12), when Halesowen's very own Champion Scout Band will be performing, entertaining shoppers with their competition winning music. Halesowen College's Beauty Academy will also be in store with a Pampering Pod.

Free manicures, make-up advice and tips will be on offer to all mothers and daughters looking to treat themselves ahead of Mothering Sunday. With its wide selection of high



quality, low-priced everyday products, including health and beauty, cleaning, pet care, confectionery, food and snacks, DIY and paint, tools and electrics, toys, gardening equipment, homewares, furniture and lights, kitchen and bath, textiles, sta-

tionery and books, Wilkinson in Halesowen will remain the local, trusted high street retailer it always has been.

Still a family owned firm after 80 years of trading Wilkinson's, the home and garden retailer, has 349 stores across the UK, selling over 25,000 product lines.

Wilkinson's is committed to Britain's high streets and is an active supporter of local charities, community groups and care organisations.

To see what other fantastic offers are available - log on to www.wilkinsonplus.com

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Waste warning sent out to firms

SEVERN Trent Water has warned it will crack-down on companies breaking the law after prosecuting a Rowley Regis metal treatment firm for dumping contaminated waste down a sewer without permission.

Stephen Gould, director and owner of Decma Limited, which operates from Titford Lane, White Heath, admitted the charge at Warley Magistrates' Court.

He was fined £1,000 with prosecution costs of £3,427 and a victim surcharge of £15.

The charges related to the firm's previous second home on Thornleigh Trading Estate, Blowers Green Road, Dudley.

Limits

Analysts found the waste contained chromium, copper, nickel and zinc.

Simon Cocks, waste water services director for Severn Trent Water, said it needed to crack-down on those who dumped contaminated waste without consent.

He said: "The limits we set to regulate trade discharges are calculated to ensure they do not adversely effect the capacity of our sewage works to efficiently treat sewage, so exceeding this consent is not only illegal; it can also damage the sewage treatment process and so risk causing harm to the environment."

Decma has since closed its Dudley plant.

Val's labour of love tells story of town's war dead

Alan all set for peak return

A WARDEN at Himley Park is preparing for a tough shift when he tackles Mont Blanc for the second time to raise money for Cancer Research UK.

Alan Peace, from Wombourne, will set off for the Alps on June 26, to mark his 65th birthday.

His previous attempt in 2009 was cut short only a few hundred metres from the summit when his group was beaten back by 'white out' blizzard conditions.

Over the past six years he has raised in excess of £30,000 for the charity, following the death of his wife, Joan, to the disease in 2004.

He was named as Cancer Research UK's Ambassador of the Year in 2009 as well as receiving an Express & Star Local Heroes award.

Alan, who has been climbing for 50 years, said: "As well as fulfilling a personal ambition of mine, I also want to raise funds for Cancer Research UK to enable the charity to continue its vital work."

To support him contact Alan on 01902 895207, or donate at www.justgiving.com/Alan-Peace

Play tickets

TICKETS remain for the play Natural Causes at Oakfield Centre, Brettell Lane, Amblecote, Stourbridge, from next Wednesday. Call 01384 394349 for tickets to see the Community Players.



Val Worwood and her helpers at the war memorial

THE stories of 25 Dudley men who died during the Second World War are brought to life in a new book compiled by a woman who tracked down and interviewed as many of their relatives and friends as she could find.

Val Worwood, helped by a cousin, Mike Smith, from Stourbridge Road, Holly Hall, Dudley, and various other friends in the community, has produced Holly Hall Heroes Remembered, described as the story of the men named on a war memorial.

The 67-year-old widow, a mother of three and grandmother of six, hopes she will find a publisher so that her labour of love can be given to relatives of the fallen and sold to raise money for the Help for Heroes charity in aid of injured servicemen and women.

She began "knocking on doors" to research the Second World War Heroes in 2008 and has now completed the book.

Destroyer

It has many contributions from friends, packed with photos of those who died as well as some of their loved ones and accounts of life in the area at the time.

It tells of how, in 1998, James Grainger, of Holly Hall, launched a campaign to have a plaque made for the war memorial in the grounds of St Augustine's Church to bear the 25 names of town men killed in the 1939-45 conflict.

The plaque was finally unveiled after a memorial service in June last year.

"I wanted to show that these were not just names on a memorial - they were all somebody's husband, son, brother or friend," said Val, of Barratts Croft, Lower Gornal, Dudley.

"It is important that faces should be



John Davies, who is buried in Italy, and George Davies, who was killed when HMS Tempest was hit by a depth charge, and John's sister Nellie

put to names of those who lost their lives so that the community knows the sacrifice those young lads made."

Among the fallen featured in the book Holly Hall Heroes Remembered is Stoker (2nd Class) George Davies, who was born in 1922, and whose family home was in Cochrane Road, Woodside, Dudley.

George became a crew member of the submarine HMS Tempest

During his final shore leave, he spent time with his school friend Gladys Meese, telling her how dangerous his missions were and asking her never to tell his mother of the peril he faced.

The 19-year-old was killed when the Tempest was hit by depth charges fired by the Italian destroyer Circe in the Gulf of Taranto on February 23, 1942.

Gladys Meese - whose married name is Gilkes - aged 86, of Cleve Road, Holly Hall, said: "What Val has done is absolutely beautiful. Nobody could have done a better job."

As George's family mourned his death, they received a telegram reporting that his cousin, Private John

Davies, known to his friends as Jack, who was serving in the 5th Battalion the Hampshire Regiment, was missing in action.

A letter dated April 6, 1944, confirmed their worst fears - he had been killed the previous October, aged 23, and his body had been found in the central Mediterranean area.

He was buried in Miturno war cemetery near Naples, Italy.

Community

Jack's sister Nellie, whose married name is Reece, aged 81, of Foxglove Road, Wrens Nest, said: "I had just left school at 14 when we heard that he had been killed and it was a shock."

"He was my parents' only son and it hit the family hard."

"Val has done a marvellous job and I am looking forward to reading the book. I'm proud of her for what she's done."

In November an exhibition of the photos collected by Val and her friends was held at Woodside Community Centre, raising £200 on behalf of Help for Heroes.

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Cry goes up for younger voices

BUDDING singers in Cradley Heath are being given the chance to showcase their talents in a youth choir.

Pure Harmony has been taken over by a new leader, Eleanor Rushbury, who is now looking for fresh talent to join the group.

The choir, which meets every Monday from 6pm until 7pm, at Lawrence Lane Methodist Church, has been running for more than three years.

Singing regularly at charity events and at concerts throughout the year, the choir is affiliated to the adult group Voices in Harmony, which is well known throughout the area for its fundraising efforts.

Eager

The youth choir, which currently has 18 members, is looking for boys and girls aged between six and 16 to join their new conductor.

Eleanor, who teaches in Sandwell, has qualified as a choral conductor through the Sing for Pleasure choral conducting programme.

She said: "I wanted to be able to use my conducting skills within the community."

"We perform all sorts of music and I am eager to get the children together to share their love for singing."

"It would be great if the youngsters that join do so with a view to carry on and eventually perform as part of the adult choir."

For more information, log on to www.vihchoir.org or call 01384 567207.

Birth unit turning away mums from out of town

MOTHERS-TO-BE are being turned away from Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital because midwives cannot cope with demand.

Russells Hall Hospital has told GPs that it will start to limit the number of applications from women who want to have their babies there as staff are already under too much pressure.

Hospital bosses said there had been an increase in the number of women applying because of the department's fine reputation.

They expect to turn away 200 people from outside Dudley over the course of the year.

Chief executive Paula Clark apologised to any mother who had been disappointed.

One man, whose wife is 10 weeks pregnant with their third child, said he found the decision ludicrous.

"We requested Russells Hall as we had our other two children there and we know it's good," said the 33-year-old, from Cosely.

"But our midwife said they were not allowing any more referrals and told us we should complain. She thought it was ludicrous too."

The couple have been forced to apply to Wolverhampton's New Cross Hospital, which is much further from the father's workplace in Brierley Hill.

He added: "What really annoys me is last year the NHS was singing about people choosing where they are treated."

Mrs Clark said neighbouring trusts, including Wolverhampton and Sandwell had been informed of the decision.

She added: "We have limited space in terms of delivery rooms and are reaching our capacity."

"Our first obligation is to continue providing a safe high quality service to our patients and by limiting the geographical area from which we draw referrals we believe we can do this."

NHS Dudley said Dudley Primary Care Trust was now reviewing services.

Land on market

LAND in Cradley Heath and Rowley Regis is being auctioned. The guide price of a 0.27-acre plot off Allbut Street, Cradley Heath, is £75,000 and a 3.3-acre site near Bury Hill Park, in Rowley Regis, has a guide price of £13,000. The auction is at Villa Park at 11am on Friday.



Trevor and Betty Homer celebrate 50 years of marriage

Silver screen's golden delight

A STOURBRIDGE couple are celebrating reaching 50-year marriage milestones.

Trevor and Betty Homer, of Jason Street, celebrated with a party and asked for donations to the Royal British Legion and Cancer Research instead of presents.

They first met at the Clifton Cinema, Lye, in 1956, and were married at St Peter's Church, Cradley, on March 4 1961.

The couple have three children, Loraine, aged 46, Roger, 42, and 36-year-old Kevin and three grandchildren, Katie-Jo, Joel and five-month-old Lexie.

Mr Homer, now 70, owned his own business Telford Tanks, in Peartree Lane, Brierley Hill, and retired five years ago. Mrs Homer, 68, said: "We still love one another very deeply."



Trevor and Betty on their wedding day

Couple allowed their dog to suffer

THE owners of a Japanese Akita dog which was underweight and suffering from a "profound" skin condition failed to take it to the vets for treatment, a court heard.

Kimberley O'Conner and Joseph O'Conner said they thought their pet, Tara, was getting better and did not need expert help. Dudley Magistrates' Court was told.

RSPCA inspectors, who visited the couple's home in Jasmine Road, Dudley, said the dog had not been fed enough and was underweight.

The 22-year-olds were banned from keeping animals for 10 years and ordered to do 200 hours of unpaid work.

Pregnant

They pleaded guilty last week to causing the animal unnecessary suffering by failing to provide an adequate diet and failing to provide proper and necessary veterinary treatment.

Mr Nick Sutton, prosecuting on behalf of the RSPCA, said inspectors visited last June and found two dogs - Tara and a German Shepherd called King.

Tara was said to be "hungry to the point of being ravenous" The dog has since been rehomed.

Mr Richard Birch, defending, said Miss Butcher had been pregnant with her third child and they had made the baby their priority as there had been complications with the pregnancy.

The pair were ordered to pay £200 costs.

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Beds, Memory Foam Beds, Bed Settees, Futons, Odd Mattresses, Dining Room Furniture,

Glass, TV Stands, Bedroom Furniture, Semi Fitted Bedroom Displays by leading

manufacturers, TCS Upholstery, Gleneagles, Wiemann, World Furniture, etc., etc ...

— SALE TO BE HELD AT —

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Oakey Well Street, Bottom Car Park, In Front of Cousins

SUITES AND SOFAS	DINING ROOM	LEATHER	BEDS
HUGE RANGE OF UPHOLSTERY AND LEATHER	DISPLAY MODELS ON SHOWROOM FLOOR TO CLEAR AT SALE PRICES. Huge range available, all to be offered at reduced rates.	ONLY 6 LEATHER RECLINER CHAIRS REMAINING £299 each	Single Size Beds £69 Double Size Beds £119 Orthopaedic Type Beds £99 Storage Beds £99
Suites - all display models to clear	BRAND NAMES AT DISCOUNT PRICES	RECLINING CHAIRS	Brand Names at Discount Prices
Leather Sofas £249	Rest and Relax	15 COMPLETE DISPLAYS AND RANGES OF BEDROOM FURNITURE. ALL TO GO AT SALE PRICES WHY PAY MORE	Myers, Sealy, Silentnight, Healthbeds
Leather Suites from £499	Rise & Recline Lift & Tilt Chairs From £399-£1299	SEMI FITTED BEDROOM FURNITURE	PLUS 30 SHOW MODELS TO BE SOLD AT A HUGE DISCOUNT PRICE TODAY ONLY
Soft Cover Suites from £399	WHY PAY MORE	Prices 2 Days Only	ODD MATTRESSES
Odd Lounge Chairs from £85	BED SETTEES/FUTONS	3 Door Runs £299	Single Size Matts £39
Many Sofas Half Price or less	Metal Frame Bed Settees	4 Door Runs £399	Double Size Matts £79
Corner Suites, Odd Sofas etc, etc	Wooden Futons - choice of colours and covers	Overbed Units POA	Reflex Foam Matts £99
Corner Suites £895	WHY PAY MORE	5 Door Robes £499	4ft 6in Memory Foam £199
Dallas Modern Style 3+2 £699	2 DAY SALE PRICES	Chests - Various Sizes - 5 colourways £399	Large amount of show models to clear 1/2 price this weekend only
Zita Latest Style - choice of fabrics £599		Mirror Sliding Units	
Can be sold as 3+1 if required			

These are just a few of the items for sale. All goods perfect unless otherwise stated.

Contemporary modern dralon, velour and numerous other fabrics and designs
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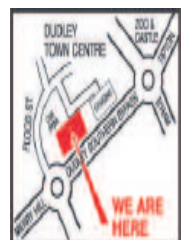
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All goods sold as perfect, unless otherwise stated. All goods carry normal manufacturers or company guarantees.
All sale items are guaranteed for a minimum of 12 months, some items guaranteed 5 years. All goods bought at this sale carry exactly the same guarantee as normal.



All quantities and sizes are approximate. Dudley's Furniture Company reserve the right to withdraw any item from sale.

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thechronicle

Bully case firm wins new date

A WORKER awaiting compensation after winning a bullying case against a Black Country care home has now been told the verdict is to be reviewed.

Joanne Hayward had won her claims for constructive unfair dismissal and disability discrimination against Pepperhall Ltd, which runs Valley Court care home, in Valley Road, Cradley Heath.

But Pepperhall successfully applied to Birmingham Employment Tribunal to have the case heard again. Miss Hayward, of Moor Street, Brierley Hill, alleged at the tribunal hearing that she had resigned because of bullying.

The firm did not oppose this as it had not responded to tribunal deadlines.

But area manager Sandeep Dhani said the firm denied Miss Hayward had been bullied and tribunal judge Mrs Pam Hughes said the case should be heard again.

Blind 'buddy' scheme given £300,000 boost

Cold takes its toll on toposcope

THE toposcope is a familiar sight to walkers on Kinver Edge.

But now it is falling apart due to the harsh winter weather.

The circular map, etched onto slate and fixed onto a stone base, has broken into three pieces in recent months.

Kinver Rotary Club has launched a campaign to raise thousands of pounds to pay for a new toposcope.

English Heritage has agreed to temporarily fix the current one but Rotary members are looking towards the future.

The original cost the club £8,000 to install in 1990 - and member Mike Deaithridge has warned the bill could be double that this time.

The toposcope gives distances to local towns including Kidderminster, Stourbridge and Bromsgrove.

The etching shows a diagram of the landscape that can be seen from that position with the naked eye and highlights local landmarks.



Kinver Rotary Club members, from left, Neil Brazier, Clive Roseblade and Mike Deaithridge with National Trust warden Edwin Blunt, second right, and the toposcope

A "BUDDY" scheme for people suffering with the loss of sight in Dudley has been extended for another five years, thanks to a £300,000 grant.

The Thomas Pocklington Trust's Stourbridge centre, is based at the Mary Stevens Centre in Hagley Road.

It has been running a pilot scheme for people in Dudley and North Worcestershire where volunteers are paired with people who are partially sighted or blind, since 2009.

The lottery grant will also help the charity expand its befriending programme to more people, and will be able to offer a wider range of activities for them to get involved in.

Chief executive Peter Corbett said staff and volunteers were all "delighted".

"This is wonderful news," he added. "The scheme gives support to people with sight loss in their own homes, preserving their independence and quality of life."

Recruiting

"With this grant we can now expand the scheme and run it for five years."

The money will be spent recruiting and training volunteers, who are then matched up with someone suffering from sight loss. They then visit their "partner" and help them with tasks such as reading their mail and doing their shopping, as well as keeping them company and accompanying them on social days out.

Mr Corbett said: "The scheme helps to reduce isolation for people with sight loss who may live alone or receive limited support."

He said the scheme was also used to provide respite for full-time carers.

For more information on volunteering call 01384 441222.

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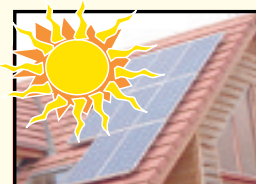
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Miss Rae of Stafford

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Miss Challoner of Wolverhampton

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Mr Hemmings of Coventry

Home of Property

Cost of renting worsens

Renting a home now costs 10.5 per cent more on average than servicing a mortgage, according to property website Zoopla.co.uk.

New research from the property search website reveals that renting a home is now a more expensive option than owning in 80 per cent of Britain's towns and cities, and the cost difference has been rising steadily since the middle of last year, when renting was 8.7 per cent more expensive.

The research looks at the asking prices of two-bedroom flats currently for sale and to rent in the 50

largest cities and towns around the country and mortgage payments are calculated assuming an interest-only mortgage at 5 per cent pa to provide an effective comparison to renting.

In some locations, the higher cost of renting is staggering. In Milton Keynes rents exceed average mortgage servicing costs by 42 per cent - with average monthly rents at £785 Milton Keynes renters are left £2,772 a year worse off compared to owners.

Completing the top 3 places where buying is far more cost-effective than renting are Walsall and Birmingham which have a 38 per cent and 35 per cent rental premium

respectively. A further nine of the largest 50 towns and cities have average rents that exceed mortgage payments by over 20 per cent.

Several factors are behind the increased cost of renting. The severe shortage of mortgages has kept many potential first-time buyers in the rental market resulting in high tenant demand, while the combination of stagnant house prices and low interest rates has reduced the monthly cost of home ownership.

Even in London, which has the highest asking prices in the country, buying is still the more cost-effective option. With an average rent of

£2,252 per month in the capital, buyers stand to save £4,656 annually compared to renters.

However, there are still some locations where renting is more cost-effective than owning.

In Plymouth, the average two-bed flat costs £581 per month to rent versus £156,435 to buy, leaving renting £71 a month cheaper than the average mortgage servicing cost. Following the buy-to-let boom with investors buying properties to rent out to the large student and military population, the extensive supply of rental property has put downward pressure on rents.

Nicholas Leeming, business devel-

opment director of Zoopla.co.uk, said: "While lenders maintain their vice-like grip on the mortgage market, more and more would-be buyers are forced to rent instead of getting onto the housing ladder. Rents will likely rise further as a result and renters will continue to pay a significant premium for being stuck in the sector."

"While buying wins out over renting today, the impact of a possible rise in interest rates cannot be ignored. If interest rates were to increase by 1 per cent and rents were to remain the same, renting would become more cost-effective in 78 per cent of the locations studied."



A three bedroom, two reception family home in Tibberton has come onto the market with DB Roberts Estate Agents for offers in the region of £189,995. Maslan Crescent offers gas central heating, log burners and UPVC double glazed windows as well as off road driveway parking for several vehicles and a back garden with allotment. Briefly, accommodation comprises lounge with log burner, dining/family, separate area currently used as a study. Kitchen, utility and upstairs the master bedroom and a further two bedrooms. Also a family bathroom. For more information or to arrange a viewing contact DB Roberts on 01952 820009.

Family home stands in quiet cul-de-sac



A four bedroom family home situated in a quiet cul-de-sac in Church Aston has come onto the market with Davies White & Perry Estate Agents for offers in the region of £295,000.

Number 13 Silverdale Close benefits from a conservatory, family room and summer house.

Inside, an entrance with wooden floor leads to the lounge with gas coal effect fire set in Adams style surround. Patio windows open to the conservatory with tiled floor, roller blinds, ceiling fan and doors to back garden.

The dining room has a radiator, two double power points and telephone socket.

The family room is currently used as

a fifth bedroom and has a wall mounted gas convector heater.

The kitchen comes fully fitted with light Oak units comprising of six base units, stainless steel sink and drainer, six burner Range cooker with extractor hood over, four matching eye level cupboards, two double power points, cooker panel and radiator.

An attached utility has a stainless steel sink and drainer, one base unit, plumbing for washing machine and dishwasher and door to the back garden.

The property also benefits from a cloakroom with toilet and sink.

Upstairs the en-suite master bedroom comes with electric shower, toi-

let, sink and radiator. There are three further bedrooms. The family bathroom comprises a white suite, radiator and shaver point.

Outside, the property is approached via a concrete driveway flanked by lawns.

A pedestrian access leads to the back garden which is virtually maintenance free with patio area beyond and lawn.

There is a Cedar wood summer house with two double power points and light. A further enclosed area houses a hot tub.

For more information or to arrange a viewing contact the agents on 01952 811003.

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Nr Newport	Edgmond	Hinstock
 Willow Cottage, ● Sandstone detached cottage of character ● Delightful country setting ● 2 acres of garden and woodland ● 3 good sized bedrooms ● Gardens with river frontage	 16 Bayley Hills ● Attractive 4 bed detached house ● Pleasant village location ● Double glazed & centrally heated ● Private walled rear garden ● PART EXCHANGE CONSIDERED	 Brook End Barn ● Spacious 4 bed barn conversion ● Country village location adjoining open countryside ● Retaining many original features ● Cloaks/WC, dining kitchen & utility ● 4 bedrooms, 2 en suite shower rooms ● Double garage & gardens
 20 Daniels Cross ● Well designed 4 bed detached family house ● Double glazed and centrally heated ● Popular area on the outskirts of town ● En suite shower room, utility ● Garage and private rear garden	 4 St Peters Way ● Semi-detached 3 bedroom house ● Situated in a pleasant village location ● Requires some updating ● Double glazed and centrally heated ● 2 reception rooms, kitchen, 3 bedrooms & bathroom ● Garage and pleasant rear garden.	 24 Laurel Drive ● Refurbished 4 bed detached house in cul de sac position ● Internal inspection highly recommended ● Gas central heating and double glazing ● 2 reception rooms new fitted kitchen & cloaks/WC ● 4 bedrooms and bathroom ● Garage and private garden
 79 Ford Road ● 3 bed semi detached house in established area ● 22ft Lounge/diner ● Kitchen, Re-fitted bathroom & shower ● Gas centrally heated, UPVC double glazed ● Garage and gardens	 17 Shepherds Court ● Most attractive mews style semi-detached house ● Centrally heated and double glazed ● Popular location guest cloakroom/WC ● Lounge, kitchen, conservatory ● 2 double bedrooms ● Off road parking.	 61 Forton Road ● Period 3 bed semi detached house ● UPVC double glazed & gas centrally heated ● Hall, Lounge, Dining Kitchen ● Conservatory ● Garage and pleasant private garden
 31 Beaumaris Road ● Well presented 2 bed town house ● Situated within easy walking distance to the town ● Double glazed spacious accommodation ● Cloak/WC, lounge, kitchen ● Bathroom with shower ● Parking and rear garden	 60 Vineyard Road ● No Upward Chain ● Semi-detached house & garage ● Well established residential area ● Requires refurbishment ● 3 good sized bedrooms ● Split rear garden	 11 Beaumaris Road ● STAMP DUTY PAID ● Semi-detached house & garage ● Gas centrally heated & Double glazed ● 2 double bedrooms - large bathroom ● Off road parking and good sized rear garden

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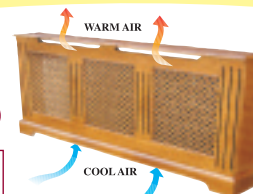
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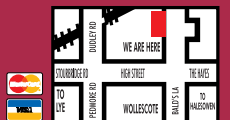


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YOUR Neighbourhood...

Keeping fit can help to peel back the years



Keeping fit can be fun and a good way to make new friends

BY the time most of us reach the age of 50 or 60 we tend to accept the negative effects of ageing as a fact of life that we have no control over. It is true that we can not stop the calendar marching ahead at what seems to be a faster and faster pace, however, recent studies have shown that we can alter the rate at which our bodies progress through the life cycle. We now have a better understanding of some people tend to age much faster than others. There is a large body of scientific evidence that suggests that we can slow down and even reverse the symptoms of ageing. In fact many of us can be in better health in our 70s than we were in our 50s. Recent studies indicate that between the ages of 30-70 many of the symptoms and conditions that were traditionally associated with normal ageing are in fact the result of sedentary lifestyles.

Energetic

Evaluating one's strength, endurance, ability and cardio-vascular-pulmonary performance before and after a one-month period of complete bed rest can be equated to 30 years of ageing. The good news is that regular exercise incorporated into our lifestyle can improve heart and respiratory function, lower our blood pressure, increase our strength, improve bone density, improve flexibility, increase our reaction time, reduce body fat, increase muscle mass, and reduce our susceptibility to depression and disease. Studies have shown that regular exercise

by middle aged and elderly people can set back the clock 20-40 years when compared to those who do little or no exercise.

Test results show that no matter when a person starts to exercise, significant improvement can be achieved. In one study of more than 200 men and women aged 56-87, 'dramatic changes' were observed after just six weeks of exercising three to five times a week. Study participants became as fit and energetic as people 20-30 years younger.

Stronger

Among once-sedentary women in their 50s who participated in an aerobic dance program for six years, fitness improved by 23 per cent and they experienced none of the functional declines typically seen with increasing age.

This group appears to have stopped the clock at an age when functional declines are usually apparent.

Comparing bone loss among women in their 80s. With those women who did seated exercises for 30 minutes, three times a week for three years, bone mineral actually increased by 2.29 per cent, whereas in a similar group of inactive women, bone loss averaged 3.28 per cent.

Various studies have shown that when our bones are taxed from exercise they grow stronger and denser and more resistant to fracture. Aerobic exercise has been shown to enhance blood flow to various parts of the brain as well as to increase the speed with which nerve messages travel through the brain.

In a study among previously sedentary

middle aged men who took part in a four-month exercise and fitness program, a significant improvement was noted in the mental processes controlled by the part of the brain (left hemisphere) responsible for logical reasoning. The men who exercised three times per week, were compared on 10 tests of mental ability to a similar group of men who remained sedentary.

In a study recently published in the Annals of Internal Medicine, older adults who exercised at least three times a week were 38 percent less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease, which causes a slow, irreversible decline in brain function.

The theory is that exercise not only increases blood flow and oxygen to the brain, it may also reduce the tell-tale 'plaque' in the brain associated with Alzheimer's disease.

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Exercise is clearly the best weapon we have to combat disease, to slow down and reverse the effects of aging. It is no wonder that the experts in the field believe that exercise is the closest thing we have to a Fountain of Youth.

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Letters of Thanks!

Dear Mrs Hemming

It was a wonderful surprise to get the prize cheque last week, my husband is 85 and I am 82 and I am recovering from a triple heart bypass so this money is very much appreciated and really cheered us up. I enclose a donation towards some things for your fete or use as you wish. Would you let me have a form for my husband to join the lottery, when you first spoke to me about it he was in hospital and things were a bit difficult.

Yours sincerely, Mrs B.C. Pedmore, Stourbridge.
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Dear Sir or Madam

Thank you so much for the cheque which I received today - What a Surprise! The first time I have ever won anything. It is only a small thank you, but I am enclosing a cheque for the Hospice which I hope will help in some small way. Your agent who collects my money is a delight, she is always helpful and pleasant.

Yours sincerely, K Chadbourne
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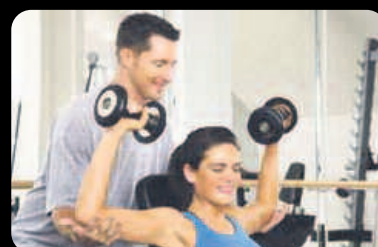
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the pulse

Eliza hopes to do a lot

ONE of the brightest British pop breakthroughs of 2010 was the delightful Eliza Doolittle with her self-titled debut album, which was back in the top 10 last week despite being released last summer.

Her breezy freewheeling retro pop has more hooks than a fishing tackle shop and the latest track to be released as a single – Mr Medicine – follows the success of Skinny Genes and Pack Up.

Real name Eliza Sophie Caird, the 22-year-old is the grand-daughter of Sylvia Young, famous for her London theatre school. Her father, John Caird, is a director with the Royal Shakespeare Company and her mother, Frances Ruffelle, was the original Eponine in West End blockbuster Les Misérables. So there must be something in those genes, skinny or otherwise.

In the autumn she achieved that rare feat for a support act at Wolverhampton's Civic Hall when she got a full house for her short set before headliner Paloma Faith, and the London-born singer and model will have a capacity audience again when she performs at the city's Wulfrun Hall on Saturday, April 2.

Old punks ready to be heroes to more

ONE of the most influential bands of the punk era, The Stranglers, are back on the road. The rock veterans, who in the 70s widened the musical horizons of punks with their tracks rich with keyboards as well as aggressive energy, issued a greatest hits plus new tracks double album recently, Decades Apart, that serves as reminder of their impact on the British music scene.

The band formed in Guildford, Surrey, in 1974, though none came from the town and they were an odd assortment of classically trained guitarist, jazz drummer and blues musicians, united by an appreciation of psychedelic rock groups like The Doors. They became one of the biggest bands of the punk era with a hardman image and songs such as Grip, Peaches/Go Buddy Go, Five Minutes and No More Heroes.

They then went on to have massive crossover success in the 80s with a mellower sound typified by Golden Brown, Strange Little Girl, Skin Deep and Always The Sun.

The band's original singer Hugh Cornwell quit the group to go solo in 1990 and Paul Roberts was the singer during the rest of that decade. He left in 2006 for an acting career and is now working as a Frank Sinatra impersonator.

The Stranglers are now a quartet featuring originals Jean-Jacques Burnel (born in London to French parents) as singer and bassist, keyboardist Dave Greenfield and 72-year-old drummer Jet Black, with Baz Warne, singer and guitarist with the band since 2000. They are in concert at Birmingham's O2 Academy on March 19. Their former frontman, Hugh Cornwell, is also on tour soon playing Wolverhampton's Slade Rooms on April 15.

The Stranglers

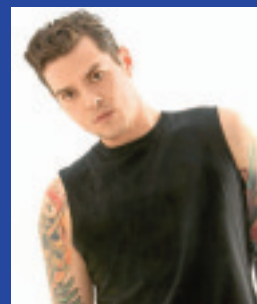


TV listings start – page 30

YOUR EIGHT-PAGE ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE AND WEEK'S TV VIEWING



Theatre and show round-up – page 34



Matt busts into dance – page 29

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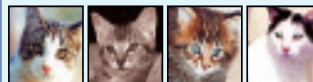
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Matt busts into dance musical leading role

MATT Willis, singer from pop group Busted and I'm A Celebrity winner, will headline his first national theatre tour in Footloose The Dance Musical playing the role of Chuck when the show can be seen at Birmingham Hippodrome from Monday to Saturday, March 14-19.

Directed and choreographed by Olivier award-winner Karen Bruce, Footloose promises the slickest, sexiest dance routines. It tells the story of city boy Ren who has to move to a rural backwater in America where he discovers that dancing is banned. Anyone who misses the show at the Hippodrome can catch up with it when it returns to the West Midlands for a run at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre in late June.

Roald Dahl has never been more popular, especially after the success of Tim Minchin's musical Matilda at Stratford. Another one of his curious tales for children, George's Marvellous Medicine, is back in Birmingham by popular demand, staged by the city's own professional Birmingham Stage Company at the New Alexandra Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday, March 15-19. The story tells of how George attempts to cure his grandmother's terrible temper with a potion, with unexpected results.

The Alex also hosts some star name one-nighters. These include The Solid Silver 60s tonight (Thurs) which is to feature The Merseybeats, Wayne Fontana, Chris Farlowe and The Crying Game hit-maker Dave Berry. Cornish comedian Jethro brings adults-only humour to the venue on Sunday. Showbiz star Joe Longthorne will be singing at the Alex on Monday. Next weekend the theatre hosts former Supreme Mary Wilson with very special guests The Chi-Lites on Sunday, March 20.

Welsh National Opera complete their run at Birmingham Hippodrome with Verdi's passionate tragedy Il Trovatore tonight and on Saturday. In contrast, they present the comic opera Die Fledermaus, by Johann Strauss II, tomorrow (Fri). Alistair MacGowan will be the Pirate King when Gilbert and Sullivan's The Pirates of Penzance gets a concert airing at the Symphony Hall in Birmingham on Sunday night. Catch a rising star when Birmingham Conservatoire present Janacek's opera The Cunning Little Vixen at The Crescent Theatre in Birmingham from tonight to Saturday. Meanwhile, The Crescent's own company stage the comedy Women On The Verge of HRT in the Sheepcote Street theatre's Ron Barber Studio to Saturday.

Wolverhampton Musical Comedy Company present one of the first amateur productions of Disney's High School Musical at the Wolverhampton Grand from Tuesday to Saturday (March 15 to 19). Cranford continues until Saturday.

Icarus Theatre's fast and frenetic version of Shakespeare's Hamlet is at Wolverhampton's Arena Theatre tonight. Maggie Fox and Sue Fyding spoof the Brontës in Lip Service's Withering Looks at the Arena tomorrow (Fri). Bertolt Brecht's classic drama about civil war and sacrifice, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, is staged by Blackedge Theatre at the Arena on Monday.

Then on Tuesday London Classic Theatre visit the Wulfruna Street venue with the brutal love story After Miss Julie, relocated in Patrick Marber's version to an English country house on the night of Labour's landslide victory in 1945. Another classic, John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men, is presented by Mind The Gap at the Arena on Wednesday and Thursday, March 16 and 17.

Talawa Theatre Company look at what it means to be young, British and black in Krunch tomorrow and Saturday at The Drum in Aston. Further afield, Shaun The Sheep stars in his own music and dance extravaganza at Stoke's Regent Theatre to Sunday. Then the Russian State Ballet of Siberia will be in residence in Hanley from March 17-19. They then move on to Wolverhampton's Grand from March 20-22 with a programme including The Nutcracker, Romeo And Juliet and Swan Lake.

Comedy highlights include Terry Alderton at The Slade Rooms in Wolverhampton tonight; Ed Byrne at Dudley Concert Hall tomorrow (Fri); Simon Munnery in The Slade Rooms on Saturday; Canadian Tom Stude at the Wulfrun Hall on Tuesday; and Ed Byrne is back for a gig at Birmingham Town Hall on Wednesday.



A scene from the show (Tye is on the right)

High note as young group to net a first

THE youthful team at Wolverhampton Musical Comedy Company (Muscom) are one of the first amateur companies to stage Disney's High School Musical.

The story about sweethearts Troy and Gabriella, whose love threatens to disrupt the American high school status quo between basketball 'jocks', science-loving 'nerds' and budding stars of the drama club, has yielded two hit Disney movies and albums.

Holly Stringfellow from Perton will play Gabriella Montez and Tye Harris, of Dudley, will be Troy Bolton. Tye, aged 19, is currently studying for a Drama and Performance degree at Wolverhampton University. This is the first time he has performed with MUSCOM.

The show is to be staged at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday, March 15 to Saturday, March 19.

Rivals

Their rivals in the musical, Sharpey Evans and her brother Ryan, will be played by Kimberley Robinson, of Codsall, and Pip Harper from Wednesfield.

The show features hit songs Start Of Something New, When There Was Me And You, Bop To The Top, Getcha Head In The Game, Breaking Free and We're All In This Together.

It will be interesting to see how Muscom's production stands up against the professional version which was a sell-out success at the Grand three years ago.

Tickets are priced from £5 to £17 (concessions available). Contact the box office on (01902) 429212 or online at www.grandtheatre.co.uk

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Cartoon 10.30 *Cartoon* 11.00
Cartoon 11.30 *The National* 11.50
Cartoon 12.00 *Cartoon* 12.30
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2.15 The Vanessa Show, 3.30 Flint Jennifer, (2001)
Fast-paced drama, starring Laura San Giacomo
and David Duchovny. **TV 14**
5.00 Home and Away (R) 6.25 OH! To Zee
News at 7.25 News in Action (R) 5.15 Music Update
3.00 Ice Road Thunder, Alex DeGorgoffski's eight
run of the season is interrupted when he drops to
help a man hurt in a car accident, while Eric
Alex pushed himself too far. 5.15 News at 5.00
The Midsouth Murders, 1.00 Law & Order, 1.00
murder of a filmmaker. 3.00 Law & Order, 1.00
murder is suspected of murder. 3.55 MGS. The
team investigated the murder of a Navy pilot. 4.15
11.55 Cop in Office. (R) 12.15 SuperCops. 9.00
Motorcop Murders. 3.00 Animal Rescue Squad
(R) 4.45 Night Cops. (R) 5.10 Wildlife SOS (R)

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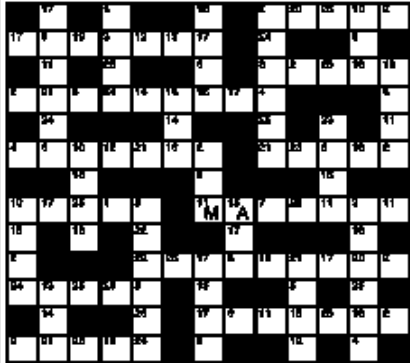


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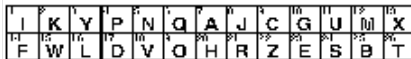
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



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Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

6. Beat a doctor in the final (7)
7. Kind of spirit found in petrol lighters (6)
9. Consumed almost too (8)
10. Ring finger about paying another visit (8)
12. Heed by only (6,6)
13. Quickest of making decisions pin wide the rest (4,7)
17. Sunny reflections (8)
19. Pull two out of shape (8)
21. Unpleasant feature of the River Sever (6)
22. Wide allowances? (7)

Down

- 1 & 5 Da. It will give you full power (6,7)
2. When departure? (8)
3. Lies about a piece of land (4)
4. Countries may share them between them (8)
5. See 1 Down
8. A bit of a blow for those waiting refreshments (6)
11. Kindly support (8)
13. Hunts away from Montague Smith (6)
14. Is it on the body (7)
16. Not the best man (6)
18. Teachers don't fear money (4)
20. Number in the phone book (3)

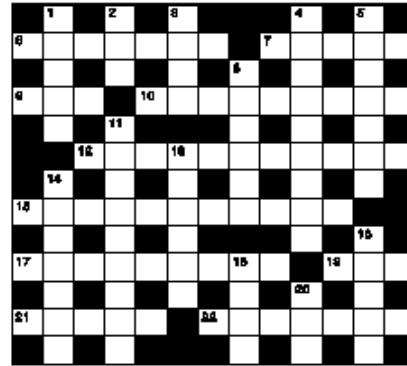
Quick Clues:

Across

6. Havant (7)
7. Hic raising (6)
9. Attempt (8)
10. Meet (8)
12. Unreadable (11)
13. Moved by Dickens (6,6)
17. Spruceless (8)
19. Anger (8)
21. Dan (8,2)
22. Modesty (7)

Down

1. Lame (6)
2. Cunning (8)
3. Spell (4)
4. Candour (8)
5. Locally (7)
8. Great (6)
11. A lot (6,3)
13. Downright (6)
14. Upstart (7)
16. Pure (6)
18. Apparent (4)
20. Bear (3)



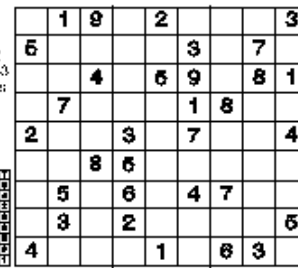
LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:

CRYPTIC: Across: 6. Swine (6,6), 8. Tinseltown, 10. Strain, 12. Tinseltown, 14. Tinseltown, 16. Tinseltown, 18. Tinseltown, 20. Tinseltown, 22. Tinseltown, 24. Tinseltown, 26. Tinseltown. Down: 1. Tinseltown, 3. Tinseltown, 5. Tinseltown, 7. Tinseltown, 9. Tinseltown, 11. Tinseltown, 13. Tinseltown, 15. Tinseltown, 17. Tinseltown, 19. Tinseltown, 21. Tinseltown, 23. Tinseltown, 25. Tinseltown.

Sudoku

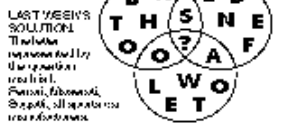
Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:



Circlegram

Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters within each circle can be arranged to form words on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION: The three words are: Tinseltown, Tinseltown, Tinseltown. The letter represented by the question mark is: T.



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JOHN PRITCHARD
talks to Emma Scott
about her mission to
find new talent.



Scott on spot to find local bands

is where she got her taste for the Midlands music scene. Her first Emma Scott Presents gig was at the Little Civic in Wolverhampton in 2007. The gig series was originally going to be once a month, but has now grown to around six times a month, which means a lot of travelling for Emma.

She said: "I spend a lot of time on the M5, travelling to and from all my gigs, but it's all worth it."

Her first seminar, called Break Your Band, was held at The Slade Rooms last month, and around 80 people heard the speech she gave about the music industry from the promoter and DJ's view.

Feedback

She said: "The feedback I received from the seminar was amazing. I didn't think that many people would turn up and we had a lot of people from bands saying I talked about things they never realised before."

Her book, Break Your Band – A Guide to Getting Radio Airplay, will be available to buy from Amazon next month and advises bands how to put together the perfect press pack, rules of the radio, which presenters play unsigned music and how to get on a station's playlist.

She said: "I hate the thought that bands are wasting their time by sending the wrong material, or missing valuable airplay as they've sent their CD to the wrong address, or offended the DJ by spelling his or her name incorrectly."

"As a presenter I get a real buzz when I get a great press pack in the post, and I get even more excited when the quality of the band is great too! I love the thought that the bands will be listening to their songs on the radio, and try and imagine how great

that must feel." The book contains quotes from Kurt Cobain, Hunter S Thompson, Paul McCartney, Jon Bon Jovi, Van Morrison, Elvis Costello and Lou Reed, which help show what the music industry is really like.

Emma said: "I guarantee any band who read the book and who follow my guidelines will get radio airplay – as long as their music is good, that is!"

The 39-year-old has been working in radio for 23 years and has received thousands of demos in her time at various radio stations, including Heart FM and Galaxy.

Last November, her most successful gig to date came when Voodoo Johnson headlined at The Slade Rooms.

The five-piece from Birmingham have gone on from strength to strength, from supporting 80s-rock band Europe, of Final Countdown fame, to headlining their own UK Tour, which visits Wolverhampton Slade Rooms on April 24.

Another success story is The Whiskey Syndicate, a rock foursome from Wolverhampton who headlined an Emma Scott Presents gig at The Slade Rooms at the beginning of February, and released their EP, Stick or Twisted? earlier this year.

Speaking of The Whiskey Syndicate, Emma said: "These guys are someone to look forward to. I've worked with them a few times and they're great."

The Emma Scott Presents gigs stopped for a brief period as she relocated to just outside Exeter, but were relaunched again in April last year as another success story, The Lines, brought the series back in style.

Since the relaunch, The Lines have gone on to headline the Wulfrun Hall, release their debut album and support local favourites Ocean Colour Scene.

Emma is looking forward to a busy future, with the hope that many of the bands she has nurtured will go on to become staples of the music industry, and, no doubt, there are likely to be more books in the pipeline.

Toploader, who had a massive hit in 2000 with their cover of Dancing In The Moonlight, are back together and touring again. The Eastbourne band, who split after the demise of their record label in 2003 despite selling a million copies of their debut album Onka's Big Moka, will release their third album, Only Human, in May. Their tour includes a date at the HMV Institute in Birmingham on Saturday, March 19.

REVIEWS

PLAN B WOLVERHAMPTON, CIVIC HALL

The Defamation of Strickland Banks became a reality last week as singer Plan B brought his story of wrongdoing to the Civic Hall. Opening with Writing's On The Wall, the sixth single off his album, the London crooner confirmed his transition from bad-boy rapper to soul superstar.

The singer, real name Ben Drew, played a set full of songs off his second album, which tells the story of the fictional singer Strickland Banks, who is jailed for a crime he didn't commit. Songs such as Welcome to Hell, The Recluse and Traded In My Cigarettes document Banks's struggles with coping in jail, while covering up the sadness with shimmering Motown grooves and crooning soul vocals.

The risky move from underground rap to Northern Soul-fuelled pop proved to be a clever one for the singer, as the crowd sung every word of singles She Said and Love Goes Down. His encore picked up the tempo as he did a medley of soul songs, which he said were for the "older crowd".

Jon Pritchard

NE-YO AND TREY SONGZ, BIRMINGHAM NIA

Trey Songz opened with a performance that appealed to the ladies. Having released four albums, he might not yet be a household name, but he certainly had the crowds on his side.

Performing covers and his own songs, including the lead single Bottoms Up from – a collaboration with Nicki Minaj from his latest album Passion, Pain and Pleasure he proved to be an excellent show man.

Ne-Yo followed with a flawless performance of upbeat numbers and emotional love songs.

Talented female dancers kept the main man company on stage, performing both provocative moves and skilled ballet steps.

Ne-Yo said: "I've heard that Birmingham's where the party's at."

This proved to be true as most of the fans spent the whole performance on their feet dancing to hits like So Sick and Beautiful Monster.

With the crowds screaming for more, he ended with an encore of Closer. Trey songz will be back in the UK at O2 Academy Birmingham on April 25.

Alex Wainwright

CRANFORD THE GRAND, WOLVERHAMPTON

This costumed comedy set in the insular world of Cranford is inhabited by a group of repressed, gossip, snobbish and class-ridden women whose biggest dilemma to date is working out how to address a countess.

The cast, lead perfectly by Kathryn Dimery as Miss Matilda Jenkins, go through the motions of Victorian living seeking to keep the status quo of Cranford until circumstances overtake them and make them re-evaluate their social priorities.

The wonderfully dressed women live in the fearful shadow of offending the sensibilities of domineering matriarch The Honourable Mrs Jamieson played with suitable starch by Hildegard Neil. Throw into the melting pot a maid with ambitions, a widowed countess who causes a stir and you have a jolly almost farcical show which produces one liners such as "You can't beat a bit of bondage to keep you warm".

Cranford runs until March 12

Danny Farragher

LA FILLE MAL GARDEE, BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME

This old favourite from the Birmingham Royal Ballet repertoire delighted audiences with its fun and frolics. Despite its French origins, this was a tale of merry old England with maypole dancing, harvest festivities, a rustic clown, a clog dancing dame and even giant chickens.

Frederick Ashton's 50-year-old version is an escapist rural fantasy, certainly a tad twee but warmly received by audiences that appreciated its humorous good nature and vibrant energy. Jamie Bond danced powerfully as the young farmer, Elisha Willis was vivacious as his sweetheart and American dancer Mathias Dingman a superb clown as her clumsy suitor. But all were upstaged by the cast's one non-dancer, a white Shetland pony.

Leon Burakowski

ELAINE PAIGE, B-HAM, SYMPHONY HALL

More than 30 years a showbiz diva, Elaine Paige proved that she's still the little lady with the biggest voice with her two-hour concert at Birmingham, which was completed by a standing ovation for the essential encore, Memory from Andrew Lloyd Webber musical Cats.

She had been in character to recall her greatest stage successes, including Evita and Norma Desmond from Sunset Boulevard. Other highlights included her version of Mike Batt's Closest Thing To Crazy, new song It's Only Life (written for her by Gary Barlow and Tim Rice and sung with impressive newcomer Hermione Hennessy) and a showstopping I'm Still Here from Stephen Sondheim's Follies.

Leon Burakowski

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TUCKED away off School Road in Himley is this deceptively spacious, detached dormer bungalow situated in a pleasant location, overlooking a brook and farmland.

The agent Berriman Eaton advises internal viewing of The Old Smithy to appreciate the generously proportioned accommodation – on the market for offers in the region of £495,000.

The house is approached through double gates, leading to a gravelled driveway with a shaped lawn leading to the brook, patio area with feature pond, further lawn area and vegetable patch.

Through the main entrance hall, double doors lead to a cloak cupboard, airing cupboard and the ground floor accommodation.

Burner

To the front of the house is a lounge measuring 18ft 7in x 15ft 2in and includes a cast iron multi-fuel burner set in a chimney recess with brick surround and hearth, two double glazed windows to the side, exposed timber truss, radiator and double doors with glazed side panels to an airy conservatory measuring 14ft 9in x 10ft 4in.

The dining room's dimensions are 18ft 8in x 12ft 9in and this room also has a cast iron, gas fired burner, radiator, double-glazed window to the side and further double-glazed bow window to the side.

A further exposed timber truss is evident and an open tread staircase leads to the first floor with a gallery sitting room measuring 17ft 1in x 11ft 11in and a further door to the breakfast kitchen measuring 19ft x 14ft 8in.

Comprising base cupboards and drawers with worksurfaces, a stainless steel sink, splashback tiling, matching wall cupboards, integrated electric double oven, gas hob with

Dormer is near to farmland



A brook is located to the front of The Old Smithy, a bungalow being marketed by agent Berriman Eaton

extractor hood and dishwasher, the kitchen also includes a dishwasher, fridge, double-glazed window to the front and door to the rear and garage.

All the bedrooms include a double-glazed window, radiator and coved ceilings. Facing the

front is the second bedroom measuring 15ft 7in x 13ft 2in, the third faces the side and is 13ft 1in x 8ft 10in while the fourth, also to the side, measures 13ft 1in x 7ft 8in.

Comprising a WC, bidet, wash basin, bath and shower cubicle the bathroom also has

splashback tiling, radiator and double-glazed window to the side. The master bedroom, which is accessed from the gallery sitting room, measures 20ft 2in x 13ft 1in and has a roof light and door to an en-suite comprising a WC, wash basin, shower cubicle with electric shower,

splash back tiling, radiator, extractor fan and double-glazed window to the side.

A further loft room measures 26ft 8in x 15ft 2in. Further details are available online at www.berrimaneaton.co.uk or to arrange a viewing call 01902 326366.



The lounge includes a large feature fireplace and French doors

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**BRIERLEY HILL
7C ACRES ROAD £675 pcm**

Modern detached bungalow in a secluded position ■ lounge, dining room, g/wc ■ extensive fitted breakfast kitchen and laundry room ■ two bedrooms, master en-suite, plus family bathroom ■ garage with electric door, c/h, d/g



**CLENT
1 CLENT COTTAGES £595 pcm**

Ground floor apartment within an idyllic setting ■ entrance hall, lounge, kitchen with modern fitted units ■ two bedrooms, bathroom / shower room ■ communal parking area to gravel forecourt, c/h, d/g



**STOURBRIDGE
183 PENFIELDS ROAD £565 pcm**

Modern mid town house close to all amenities ■ lounge, breakfast kitchen with free-standing appliances ■ three bedrooms, bathroom with shower, rear garden with patio area ■ alarmed, c/h, part furnished



**MERRY HILL
397 THE EMBANKMENT £500 pcm**

Immaculate first floor apartment ■ large lounge with modern kitchen recess, balcony area, separate utility store cupboard ■ intercom system, two bedrooms, master ensuite shower room ■ allocated parking space, c/h, d/g



**MERRY HILL
34 COLUMBUS AVENUE £500 pcm**

Modern second floor apartment ■ lounge area, patio doors, kitchen recess modern fitted units/integrated appliances ■ two bedrooms, master with en-suite shower ■ one designated parking space, c/h, d/g



**AMBLECOTE
19 CAMEO DRIVE £495 pcm**

Recently redecorated semi detached house in a popular location ■ rear lounge with patio doors to rear garden, g/wc, modern fitted kitchen ■ two bedrooms, bathroom with shower, rear garden with decking ■ parking to frontage, c/h, d/g, alarmed



**WORDSLEY
12 CROWNOKES DRIVE £485 pcm**

Modern first floor apartment ■ lobby, lounge area, kitchen recess ■ two bedrooms, master with en suite, bathroom ■ d/g, e/h, allocated parking, alarmed



**STOURBRIDGE
STUDIO FLAT 16 GREENFIELD AVENUE £395 pcm**

Studio apartment, lounge area, kitchen recess ■ modern units/integrated fridge, electric cooker, hob and extractor hood ■ one bedroom, separate shower room, cubicle, washbasin and low level wc ■ one parking space, c/h, d/g ■ additional £120 pcm to cover, council tax, gas, electricity, water and TV licence bills



**DUDLEY
MIDDLE PARK ROTARY HOUSE £82.31 - £106.21 per week**

Warden controlled housing for people of retirement age ■ single/double bedroom flats ■ Rental: £82.31 - £106.21 per week



BRIERLEY HILL FOXDALE DRIVE

Cluster Style Property, lounge, kitchen, one bedroom, bathroom with shower, carpets and curtains, allocated parking, Unfurnished

£390 pcm



PENSNETT BLEWITT STREET

Semi Detached Property, Lounge, Kitchen, WC, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Gas Central Heating, Carpets & Curtains, Unfurnished, Off Road Parking, DSS Considered

£495 pcm



TIPTON MADIN ROAD

Semi Detached Property, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Breakfast Room, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Carpets & Curtains, Unfurnished, Available Immediately

£550 pcm



DUDLEY STOURBRIDGE

Terrace property, dining room, kitchen, two bedrooms, bathroom, central heating, carpets, curtains, rear garden, Unfurnished

£510 pcm



DUDLEY SALOP STREET

Ground floor flat, Lounge, kitchen, bathroom with shower, one bedroom, gas central heating, double glazing, carpets & curtains, DSS considered, No Pets.

£385 pcm



TIVIDALE QUAYS BRINDLEFIELDS WAY

Terrace Property, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Carpets & Curtains, Unfurnished, Front & Rear Gardens, Off Road Parking

£495 pcm



SWINDON REYNOLDS CLOSE

Detached Property, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, WC, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Carpets & Curtains, Unfurnished, Front & Rear Gardens, Garage

£795 pcm



BROCKMOOR STATION ROAD

Semi Detached Property, Lounge, Kitchen, WC, Two Bedrooms, Bath, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Unfurnished, Front & Rear Garden, Parking, Available Immediately

£550 pcm



BRIERLEY HILL DELPH ROAD

Detached property, Lounge, dining room, kitchen, four bedrooms, bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, front and rear gardens, carpets and curtains, Unfurnished.

£650 pcm



WILLENHALL MILL LANE

End Terrace Property, Lounge, Large Kitchen/Diner, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom, Carpets & Curtains, Unfurnished, Rear Garden, Parking.

£475 pcm



NORTON CHESTNUT CLOSE

Semi Detached Property, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, WC, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Carpets & Curtains, Unfurnished, Front & Rear Gardens, Off Road Parking

£615 pcm



GORNAL NEW STREET

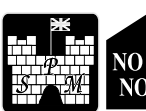
End Terrace Property, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bath, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Unfurnished, Front & Rear Garden, Parking

£535 pcm



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HALESOWEN BLAGDON ROAD

Ground Floor Flat, Large Lounge, Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Carpets & Curtains, Unfurnished, Single Garage Available Immediately

£525 pcm



BRIERLEY HILL DADFORD VIEW

Cluster Home, Lounge, kitchen, two bedrooms, bathroom, unfurnished, off road parking, double glazing, DSS considered.

£460 pcm



RUSSELLS HALL LANGSTONE ROAD

Semi-detached property, Lounge, dining room, kitchen, two bedrooms, bathroom, double glazing, front and rear gardens, carpets and curtains, Unfurnished.

£510 pcm



DUDLEY BOURNE STREET

Ground Floor Flat, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Electric Heating, Carpets & Curtains, Gas, Double Glazing, Allocated Parking

£425 pcm



ROWLEY REGIS STUART ROAD

Semi Detached Property, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Carpets & Curtains, Front & Rear Gardens

£585 pcm



GORNAL REDHALL ROAD

Semi Detached Property, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Carpets & Curtains, Unfurnished

£650 pcm



NETHERTON PARK ROAD

First Floor Flat, Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Double Glazing, Electric Heating, Carpets & Curtains, Unfurnished

£350 pcm



KINGSWINFORD GRANTLEY CRESCENT

DETACHED Property, Kitchen, Dining Room, Three Bedrooms, Bath, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Carpets & Curtains, Unfurnished, Rear Gardens, Off Road Parking

£750 pcm



TIPTON HOPKINS STREET

Semi Detached Property, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, WC, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Carpets & Curtains, Unfurnished

£525 pcm



GREAT BRIDGE EAGLE PLACE

Modern Apartment, Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, One Bedroom, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Off Road Parking

£370 pcm



COSELEY ROSEVILLE PRECINCT

First Floor Flat, Lounge, Kitchen, Double Bedroom, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Carpets & Curtains, Unfurnished

£360 pcm



DUDLEY THE PARADE

Semi-detached, kitchen, dining room, bathroom with shower, double glazing, carpets, curtains, Unfurnished, DSS considered, No Pets

£550 pcm

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Berriman Eaton is marketing the sale of this distinctive, detached family home in Stourbridge for offers in the region of £695,000

Distinctive home is in Stourbridge

This distinctive, recently constructed family house in Stourbridge is on the market with Berriman Eaton for offers in the region of £695,000.

The Wynwood House estate in Lawnswood includes more than 3,000sq ft, has no upward chain, an impressive hallway with oak staircase, guest cloak, lounge, dining room, study, breakfast kitchen/family room, utility and bedrooms with en-suites and dressing rooms.

In addition the house is gas centrally heated with uPVC double glazing, a double detached garage with side lobby and office/playroom above. The grounds are approached through gated controlled electric gates with intercom, along an asphalt driveway with shrub borders and mature trees which leads to the garage with further remote controlled up-and-over doors.

Gated side access leads to the private rear garden with patio, security lighting, cold water tap and lawn area with fence boundary, screened by mature trees.

Access to the house is under a covered porch to the hallway with guest cloakroom and double doors to the lounge which measures 21ft 11in x 14ft 2in.

Features include French doors to the rear, a window to the side, fireplace alcove with gas point and tiled hearth, two radiators, two ceiling lights, television aerial point, telephone point and coved ceiling.

Further double doors from the hall lead to the dining room which has dimensions of 14ft 2in x 13ft 5in and includes a bay window to the front, radiator and coved ceiling.

The spacious breakfast kitchen/family room measures 25ft x 15ft 9in and includes a range of

cupboards and drawers with granite worksurfaces, an inset sink with mixer tap, island unit, wine rack, matching wall cupboards with under-lighters, a five-ring gas hob with extractor hood, built-in electric oven, microwave, fridge and freezer, coved ceiling, tiled floor, granite splashbacks, ceiling spotlights, radiator, television aerial point and telephone point. There is also a utility area measuring 7ft 5in x 5ft 11in with further cupboards, sink unit with mixer tap and plumbing for a washing machine.

On the first floor landing with airing cupboard, doors lead to a bedroom measuring 14ft 7in x 14ft 1in.

Features here include a double-glazed window to the rear, coved ceiling, ceiling spotlights, radiator, two double wardrobes, television and telephone point and a door to an ensuite comprising a WC, wash basin with vanity cupboard below, fully tiled double shower cubicle and chrome heated towel rail.

Sloping

The second bedroom measures 14ft 11in x 12ft 4in and overlooks the front. It also includes a walk-in wardrobe and door to a further ensuite.

With two double built-in wardrobes the third bedroom measures 14ft 5in x 11ft 7in.

The fourth bedroom has sloping ceilings and measures 11ft 7in x 12ft 2in and there is also a family bathroom with WC, wash basin, spa-style bath and shower cubicle with mixer shower.

From the first floor landing a further oak staircase leads to the second floor where a door leads to the fifth bedroom which features three skylights, ceiling spotlights, eaves storage and television and telephone points.

The room measures 18ft 8in x 16ft 3in and also includes a dressing room and further bathroom.

To arrange a viewing, contact the Wombourne office on 01902 326366.



Mature hedges ensure a private aspect for the rear garden and paved patio



The stylish kitchen includes an island unit with granite worksurfaces above

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Peugeot 508

ROAD TEST

Modern, desirable and so French

We'll do our best to steer well clear of national stereotypes for obvious reasons, but to give credit where it's due the best French cars are decidedly, well – French.

If you pick through the highlights of Peugeot's back catalogue, the more they have stuck to their guns rather than trying to chase the approach of rival manufacturers, the better the end product.

By mutual agreement the 205 of 1983 is regarded as the finest Peugeot of recent times, blessed as it was with a pretty body, simple interior and a sweet driving experience.

Wagons

But Peugeot also enjoys a reputation as a maker of fine mid-sized saloons and wagons, with the 505, 405 and recent 407 being the pick of the bunch.

It is the job of the 508 to take on that mantle, a difficult task given that it has to please the Gallic purists who want to see a floaty ride and a quirky cabin as well as tempt those who are on their fifth German saloon in as



There's a quality feel to the switchgear



The 508's shape has presence and style



The 508 is a desirable, capable saloon that will give buyers plenty to think about

many years and are quite happy, thank you very much.

It is a fierce market to compete in with manufacturers fighting over a gradually falling number of buyers.

But thankfully the Peugeot artisans have taken the holistic approach to the problem and decided that their own way is the only way.

First impressions confirm that this is a truly modern Peugeot, much in the spirit of the 3008 crossover in that it steadfastly refuses to simply follow existing trends.

The shape has presence and an unmistakable style: this could not be confused with the product from another country.

The Peugeot badge takes

pride of place on the distinctive nose while the slim windows and gently curving shoulder line give it more of a coupe look – something that will no doubt be met with enthusiasm by potential owners.

There are LED lights at the rear too, designed to look like claws on the saloon, all of which adds up to a quality feel. Quality is

clearly a priority on the inside too and it is pleasing to see smart new switchgear deployed on the dashboard.

Console

A large screen sits at the centre of things with the main controls on the centre console, while the usual clever arrangement of buttons on the steering

wheel mean everything is within easy reach. Add in the head-up display that's already been put to good use elsewhere in the Peugeot range and the 508's cabin has plenty going for it – not least an abundance of space for front and rear occupants.

Although not available on the saloon, it is worth mentioning the panoramic glass roof available on the SW version which runs almost the length of the car and provides a wonderfully airy feeling for passengers.

The French firm hasn't skimped on the engineering for the sake of a posh cabin.

Wishbone

Unlike all of its rivals there are two types of front suspension design depending on the specification of the car, with the higher end versions gaining a more sophisticated double wishbone set-up.

However, you need not feel short-changed if you go for the lesser version: despite the clear advantages on paper, the simpler front strut layout delivers such a good balance between sharp, consistent responses and a fluid ride that you'll forget all about the next model up.

Just like all the best Peugeots the 508 breezes along even more challenging roads and is happy

to waft when required to do so. With high levels of noise insulation and even the more humble four-cylinder diesel unit up front there is very little to disturb cabin occupants.

Large distances can be covered with great ease.

Better still the 508 is just as happy to play in the bends, providing resolute grip and a forgiving nature.

There can be no question that the 508 has to face off against some very tough opposition.

But the great news is that this is the most convincing response to its rivals, and building on the strengths of the outgoing car has resulted in a complete, desirable and capable saloon that will give private and fleet buyers something to think about. **MATT JOY**

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Model: Peugeot 508 1.6 e-HDi Active, £21,975

Engine: 1.6-litre diesel engine producing 112bhp and 202lb.ft of torque

Transmission: Six-speed automated manual gearbox

Performance: Top speed 122mph, 0-62mph in 11.9 seconds

Economy: 64.2mpg combined

Emissions: 109g/km of CO2 (by summer 2011)

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Official Government fuel consumption figures (Range): Urban cycle, Extra urban, Combined (litres per 100km/imp/g) & CO2 emissions (g/km): Highest: Citroën C4 V6 HDi 240 6-speed automatic 10.0/28.2, 5.8/48.7, 7.3/38.7, 190. Lowest: Citroën C3 HDi 90 manual Airflow+ 4.7/60.1, 3.3/85.6, 3.8/74.3, 99.

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SPORTS

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05 Reg	RENAULT MEGANE 1.6 DYNAMIC AUTOMATIC Silver, Auto, A/C, Alloys, CD, 49k.	£3695	£224
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Ford unveils latest small car

FORD unveiled its new B-Max vehicle at the 2011 Geneva Motor Show, providing an early preview of exciting innovations from Ford in the small car market.

The B-Max has a unique new body design which eliminates the traditional B pillar and features twin rear sliding doors.

This innovative format – which has already been engineered for production – promises best-in-class access to the cabin, together with unmatched convenience and flexibility.

The innovation continues inside the cabin, where the interior offers exceptional space and versatility for such a compact vehicle. The use of high quality materials shows that small, practical cars can also be comfortable and well-equipped.

Stephen Odell, chairman of Ford of Europe, said: "The new B-Max signals that Ford is ready to bring the same bold thinking to the small car market. With its unique door format and dynamic design, the B-Max sends a strong message that customers looking for a compact, stylish and versatile



The Ford B-Max has a novel door design vehicle will soon have an exciting new choice."

Based on Ford's global B-car platform – shared with the highly successful new Fiesta – the B-Max is slightly more than four metres in length, just 11cm longer than the Fiesta five-door.

With this compact footprint, the B-Max is ideally placed to meet the fast-growing demand for downsized cars which are better suited to congested urban conditions, but without sacrificing interior space and comfort. With both front and rear doors open

there is outstanding access to the interior, with a huge, clear aperture measuring over 1.5 metres wide.

This is around twice the width offered by competitors with alternative door concepts, making it significantly easier to enter or exit the rear seats, attend to children in child seats, or load shopping.

Having folded the 60/40 split rear seats and the front passenger seat to create an extensive flat load floor, the side access is particularly convenient to load bulky items such as flat-pack furniture or even a bicycle. Loads up to 2.35m long can be stored in the car.

The B-Max is powered by an ultra-low-CO2 powertrain, featuring a state-of-the-art three-cylinder 1.0-litre Ford EcoBoost petrol engine, equipped with the Ford Auto-Start-Stop system.

Designed to replace larger conventional four-cylinder petrol engines, the three-cylinder Ford EcoBoost engine is undergoing final development prior to its production launch.

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CT 200h prices start from £23,485 OTR. Model shown CT 200h SE-I costing £23,995 including optional metallic paint. Price correct at time of going to press and in delivery, number plates, full tank of fuel, one year's road fund license and £55 first registration fee.
CT 200h fuel consumption and CO₂ figures: urban 68.9 mpg (41 L/100km), extra-urban 70.6 mpg (40 L/100km) combined 68.9 mpg (41 L/100km). CO₂ emissions combined 94 g/km

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sport

Elijah sets gold mark

CHARLESWORTH Martial Arts School returned from the British Championships in Nottingham with an impressive medal haul.

World and European champion Elijah Everall, aged 12, was the star man for the Old Hill-based club, winning gold medals in separate weight categories.

He beat the World Organisation of Kicking Associations (WAKO) world champion in the first round and then saw off three other opponents to become the -47kg British champion.

He also went into the -52kg section and in the final he beat yet another world champion. Coach Jason Charlesworth said: "I believe Elijah has the world at his feet."

Other successes included Tara Billingham, two golds, and Kyran Cox, one, and a bronze for Weston Bogle, 14.

School out of rugby cup

OLD Swinford Hospital are out of Daily Mail RBS Schools U18 Cup after losing to Rutland outfit Oakham School 17-10 in Saturday's semi-final.

Oakham went ahead against the run of play through winger James Harris, with England U18 star Charlie Walker adding the extras.

Oliver Simcox's try and Max Stelling's conversion brought Old Swinford back to level terms, and Stelling's penalty just after half time put his side in front.

A stunning solo effort from Walker snatched the lead back, with his conversion and a later penalty securing victory.

Away day joy for Gornal after two defeats

DUDLEY SPORTS 2 GORNAL ATHLETIC 4
Gornal got back to winning ways after back-to-back defeats against AFC Wulfrunians and Tividale with an impressive display at Dudley Sports.

The visitors sped into an early 3-0 lead within 17 minutes and, at one stage, threatened to run up a cricket score.

Gregg Gray opened the

scoring on 11 minutes, smashing home a volley from 15 yards after Sports cleared a free kick.

And the same player doubled the lead just 60 seconds later, taking advantage of some lax defending to compose himself and slot home.

On 17 minutes a 40 yard free kick into the Dudley Sports box by Richard Young eluded everybody, including

keeper Samuel Pearson, and bounced into the back of the net.

Brave defending among the Sports ranks denied Gray a ten minute hat-trick before things went from bad to worse for the home side when centre-half James Taylor was forced to withdraw with injury.

Dudley Sports pulled a goal back early in the second half through skipper Mark Gore

before a poor challenge by Steve Bull on Gurd Wilkhuo led to a second yellow card and dismissal.

Even with ten men the home side continued to battle, although it was Gornal who restored their three goal advantage on 69 minutes.

Matt Martin, making his league debut for the Peacocks, picked out Jake Morgan perfectly in the box and the striker made no mistake with

the header. Another excellent cross by the debutant on 79 minutes found Marvin Nesbitt who also nodded home, only to see the linesman flag for offside.

Dudley Sports finished the game on a high, however, as deep into stoppage time Kevin Vogeli robbed Paul Henley of possession and lobbed Gornal James Pemberton with a shot that went in off the underside of the bar.

Croatian scores winner in late show thriller

WOLVERHAMPTON SPORTS 3 DUDLEY TOWN 4

CROATIAN striker Deniz Bala was the hero as Dudley Town edged out rock-bottom Wolverhampton Sporting Community in a thriller at The Dell Stadium. Bala struck the winner with five minutes to go – his second goal of the game as the Robins moved six points clear of the relegation zone, writes Chris Davis.

Dudley were able to call on the services of Joe O'Neil following a holiday, while Danny Bell returned from an ankle injury.

The Robins flew out of the traps and should have been in the lead after six minutes.

A pinpoint pass from Bell found Ben Store, but he could only fire the ball straight at Wolves goal-

keeper Dan Watson. Store quickly made amends for his lapse four minutes later by freeing Matt Hearsey to chip Watson for his first goal in Dudley colours.

There were further chances to extend the lead for the hosts, with Bell, Store and Bala all going close. But the visitors grew in confidence and equalised through Daniel Lloyd who looped a header over Matt Rodgers on the half hour mark.

Wolves could have gone ahead on the stroke of half time, but Bowen's looping free-kick smashed against the top of Rodgers' crossbar.

On 62 minutes the league's basement dwellers shocked the Robins by taking the lead when Ryan Jones scored with a fine shot from the

right-hand side. Dudley regrouped and just four minutes later levelled the scores when Bala broke free of the Wolves defence to place the ball coolly under substitute keeper Ben Moore.

It appeared to be the hosts' game after 72 minutes when Danny Bell scored his first Robins goal since his transfer from Bustleholme.

With new signing Ben Stretton pulling the strings in midfield Dudley looked pretty comfortable, but a contested free-kick, smashed home by Alex Hyde, changed the run of the game and levelled things up. With five minutes left, substitute Nick Jones was allowed space to back-head Bala through on goal and the target man scored his second goal for a dramatic late winner.

Five tries can't halt a Cornish pasting

REDRUTH 36 STOURBRIDGE SAXONS 32

REDRUTH fly half Aaron Penberthy grabbed the headlines with a perfect eight-from-eight return, to steer his side past valiant Stourbridge in a thriller.

The 18-year-old kicked five penalties and three conversions, as his team claimed four vital points, writes Paul Smith.

Stourbridge outscored their hosts by five tries to three, and claimed both bonus points, but ultimately paid the price for missing too many important touches, and the concession of too many kickable penalties.

Stourbridge man of the match Ashley Smith got the visitors off to a flyer when he squeezed in the left corner for his maiden National One try with only five minutes on the clock.

Penberthy kicked three fine penalties in the opening half hour in response to a single Jamie Hearn strike.

However, Stour consistently threatened with ball in hand, and soon claimed a second try when full back Hearn's dazzling 60 metre burst left centre Charlie Hayter with a canter to the line.

Hearn converted, but Redruth racked up ten rapid unanswered points in six pre-interval minutes to claim an advantage they never relinquished.

Advantage

A series of forward drives saw second row Luke Collins barge over, with Penberthy adding the conversion, then his fourth penalty, awarded when Rupert Cooper was sin-binned following a scuffle on the ground.

Turning to play into Hell Fire Corner, a one man advantage offered Redruth just the incentive they needed, and they piled on the pressure, to force a second converted close-range score through Damien Cook.

Nonetheless, the Saxons refused to concede defeat, and when Smith broke a weak midfield tackle, he raced away from the

This produced two more excellent tries – a fine finish from Hearn and a maiden effort from Ben Sparks following a driving line-out.



Try-scorer Ashley Smith defence, before intelligently releasing Sam Baker, who finished in style.

But the relegation-threatened home side ended any thoughts of a Saxons comeback with another ten point salvo at the start of the final quarter.

Winger Sean Hawkey's diagonal burst took him into the left corner, and Penberthy converted, before adding another penalty following a dangerous Stourbridge tackle.

The visitors continued to press, and when Redruth front row forwards Darren Jacques and Richard Brown both infringed in the red zone, Stourbridge were left with a two man advantage throughout injury time.

This produced two more excellent tries – a fine finish from Hearn and a maiden effort from Ben Sparks following a driving line-out.

THE NEW BOYS LEARN LESSON

Guns spiked as Peel power in seven

ROB Peel FC made sure Young Guns stay deep in trouble in the Brierley Hill Premier division as Dan Cowell lent them home to a 7-0 victory.

In division one Pass Masters are all but assured of the second promotion spot and beat Clinically Insane 3-0.

Dudley Lions roared home 22-0 this week in the Wolverhampton Monday 6 a side league, crushing Sparkys R Us FC, while Pink Panthers have four points from four games after they saw off Hardly Athletic 3-1.

The Legends preserved top spot on the Wolverhampton Tuesday league – just. They beat Beer Bellies 8-7 in a ding-dong battle which saw James Dickinson score five of the winning sides goals.

Midlands All Stars humbled Only Here For The Beer 8-3.



Young Guns stay in deep trouble

FIRST-HALF goals from Leon Broadhurst and Ryan Rowe earned a depleted Glassboys side a vital victory away at Oxford City in the Zamaretto Premier.

With Paul McCone, Ben Billingham, Sam Rock, Paul Lloyd, James Dyson, Craig Connor and Ryan Mahon all missing from the Stourbridge line-up, there was a return to the fold for Daryl Jones who played on the left-hand side of midfield.

Youth team players Sam Pritchard and Matt Preston were named among the Stourbridge substitutes.

A cut-up and sanded playing surface was hardly conducive to good football, but the visitors stuck to their task throughout, particularly in the second period when it was backs-to-the-wall for long spells.

Nathan Bennett proved immense for Gary Hackett's men. Stourbridge drew first blood after 25 minutes. Jamie Oliver started the move as he fed Rowe who in-turn threaded a pass through to Broadhurst who hit a right-foot shot that took a deflection to leave home keeper Jakub Jesionkowski wrong-footed.

Four minutes before the interval, the Glassboys doubled their advantage with another goal that enjoyed an element of good fortune.

Linden Dovey won a tackle and Rowe ran on to the loose ball in the inside right channel area before hitting a low angled 20-yard shot that Jesionkowski should have saved as he dived down to his left.

OXFORD 0 STOURBRIDGE 2

However, the ball squeezed under his arm to provide the visitors with a two-goal cushion.

City were quickly onto the attack after the restart to force Stourbridge onto the defensive and this time the home attack carried more threat.

After some anxious moments in and around the Glassboys box, the hosts should have pulled a goal back in the 52nd minute after Sam Smith blotted an otherwise typically solid display when he dawdled on the ball and allowed himself to be closed down by the sprinting Barcelos who burst through on the visitors' goal.

Solly came to the Glassboys rescue, standing up tall to smother the shot.

Dovey saw a shot touched round his near post by Jesionkowski and then, in the dying minutes, young sub Sam Pritchard fed Canavan who fired just wide.

With a free midweek, Gary Hackett will hope that some of his side will recover from their injuries for this Saturday's trip to Weymouth.

Double blow and a red card

HALESOWEN 1 CHIPPENHAM 2

TEN-MAN Halesowen were denied victory after a largely unconvincing Chippenhams took the points with two second half goals, writes David Johnson.

After a slow start to Tuesday's game, Alan Griffin headed the ball onto Sam Allison but his fierce shot was beaten away by debut home goalkeeper Louis Connor.

Halesowen's Justin Nisbett looked lively in the first period and his cross was turned behind for a corner by Nathan Rudge, with the resulting corner cleared from under the crossbar.

The Yeltz took a surprise 21st minute lead when Michael McGrath's corner was

helped on by Chris Godwin and Andre Hinds provided the final touch for his first Halesowen goal. Nisbett caused further danger with a 29th minute cross and then skipped several challenges only to see his final weak shot collected by visiting goalkeeper Chris Snoddy.

Towards the end of a disappointing first half for the visitors, Allison crossed for Griffin to nod just wide.

Halesowen ended an encouraging half with towering Jeremiah Richards heading just wide.

Meetings between the two teams have a long history of incidents and the game exploded into life in the 64th minute.

Peter Folkes' late foul on Lye resulted in a yellow card and centre-forward Richards was shown a straight red-card for retaliating in the ensuing melee.

Lewis Powell's wide angle shot was cleared off the line but Chippenhams soon equalised against Halesowen's 10 men.

Griffin headed on James Guthrie's corner for Powell to nod home from close

range in the 69th minute. The Bluebirds struck again seven minutes later when Luke Gullick glanced home a header from Guthrie's right-wing corner.

However, Chippenhams were then also reduced to 10 men when Tindle received a straight red card for his challenge on substitute Mark Smith, who had only arrived on the pitch a couple of minutes earlier.

The visitors saw out the game to claim all three points, although a last minute free kick from McGrath was saved by Snoddy. The visiting goalkeeper then escaped again in injury time after spilling another McGrath set piece.

HALESOWEN 1 CHESHAM 4

Leon Archer was the scourge of Halesowen, striking a hat-trick to give promotion-chasing Chesham a 4-1 win. The Yeltz handed debuts to Peter Folkes and Jem Mills on Saturday.

Archer took just 45 seconds to score his first and scored his other two either side of the break. Justin Nisbett grabbed a consolation goal.



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